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GREAT MASTERS OF  
DUTCH AND FLEMISH  
PAINTING







REMBRANDT  
THE MAN WITH THE HELMET  
BERLIN

*Frontispiece*



843g

# GREAT MASTERS OF DUTCH AND FLEMISH PAINTING

BY

W. B O D E

TRANSLATED BY

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*This book has been translated from the second  
and revised edition of Dr. Bode's "Rembrandt  
und seine Zeitgenossen."*

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## REMBRANDT VAN RIJN

At the centre of Dutch Art—in point both of time and of importance, as well as from the extent of his productions—stands Rembrandt van Rijn. Even if Rembrandt had not been an artist of genius, he must have aroused our interest more than almost any other Dutch painter: so rich and varied is the work he left behind him. We have more than 600 of his paintings; the number of his etchings is greater than that of any other early painter-etcher, and his astonishing fertility as a draughtsman is attested by more than a thousand drawings from his hand. From the inventory of his sale we know that these drawings represent only a small part of his actual work as a draughtsman. No painter, with the exception of Rubens, who reached nearly the same age, can be compared with Rembrandt in creative power and productiveness; none has a more extended range of treatment; above all, he is unrivalled in the individuality of his art, in the breadth and profundity of his ideas, no less than in their pictorial rendering.

No special pleading is needed for Rembrandt to-day. The artist comes nearer our modern view of art than Raphael or Michael Angelo; he is equally esteemed, and paid for as highly by collectors. When, some sixty years ago,

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Eugène Delacroix wrote in his diary: "Perhaps we shall one day find out that Rembrandt is a greater painter than Raphael," he added, half apologetically: "I write down this blasphemy, which will cause the hair of the schoolmen to stand on end, without taking sides." Rembrandt is so popular to-day that his name is occasionally misused to express modern sentiments. Koloff's remark: "We need only pronounce the word Rembrandt; it is just the same as, nay more than, saying Art," begins to hold good, for how many long æsthetic treatises are given to the world under his flag which can only be detrimental to his real appreciation?

Rembrandt's art is so impressive, so many-sided, that it has had its enthusiastic followers at all times, however opposed to him the art-movement or the æsthetic feeling might appear to be. Even during the deepest decay, when Dutch art was at its lowest ebb under the supremacy of the snuff-box painters—of a Ridder van der Werff, and Willem van Mieris—Rembrandt had zealous friends among his countrymen. When the English began to collect, Rembrandt's pictures and etchings were primarily sought for, and in Paris, even at the time of a Boucher and a Greuze, his pictures were amongst those that fetched the highest prices. At that time the Empress Catharine, the Elector of Hesse, and Augustus the Strong made their collections of Rembrandt's paintings. Sir Joshua Reynolds was the artist's warmest admirer, and possessed a number of excellent pictures from his hand. In Germany, at the same time, a group of artists, the best known of whom were the painter Dietrich and the engraver Schmidt, adopted his art-conception. Even during the Empire, at

the time of a David, there was no falling-off in the esteem in which the artist was held ; since then it has increased and is now general. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Rembrandt's youthful, delicately executed paintings were most admired ; in the " thirties " the Romanticists were full of enthusiasm for his dramatically conceived pictures ; the brown tone, which was later the dominating characteristic of modern painting, found its model in Rembrandt's pictures from his middle period, while the modern of the moderns prize most the more sketchy work of his last years.

It was through Rembrandt that Dutch art reached the clear expression of its character. He represents the culminating point of its development. In Germany, nowadays, people like to claim Rembrandt as a German. True it is that he comes of a pure Teutonic stock, and that his art is thoroughly Teutonic. It is altogether the most powerful expression of Teutonic culture, which has no more perfect representative among its artists. Amongst the Teutons, art repeatedly reached a maturity which can stand comparison with the noblest art phases of the Greeks and Italians. But while in France Gothic art grew and developed superbly on a Romanic stem (and therefore contains Romanic elements by the side of the Teutonic), while the art of Rubens is thoroughly Teutonic but only matured when brought in contact with Italian art, the art of Rembrandt, like that of the brothers Van Eyck, is purely Teutonic. His conception has many points of contact with those earlier periods. The alluring mysticism of the Middle Ages, the magic chiaroscuro of the Gothic cathedral with its soaring yet self-contained



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grandeur, the deeply religious, poetic mood of this art is peculiar to him also; but Rembrandt no longer strives heavenward only. He does not lose himself in the infinite, or seek his ideal outside man, but he discovers the divine in man himself, and finds peace and calm in his own heart. A mysticism entirely peculiar to himself speaks to us from the great Dutchman's pictures, as well as from his sketches whether with pencil or the etcher's needle. There is no rustling of celestial wings on the incense-laden air in lofty Gothic aisles, no fanatical striving after the mortification of the flesh in hope of a fairer hereafter, but quiet satisfaction in work, in living for one's fellow-creatures. It is the mystery of love, which, in reliance on Providence, enters the humblest hut and smiles radiantly at us from the homeliest features or the most furrowed countenances.

Rembrandt marks the close of a development which began with the Van Eycks. He has much in common with the great discoverers of nature for art, with the founders of the "Renaissance" this side of the Alps. He has their severe realism, their incorruptible honesty and accuracy in the conception and rendering of nature, their naïve human feeling, their absorption in the task set, their sense of colour. But instead of the Van Eycks' beauty of local colouring and its enamel-like brilliancy, he gives intense effects of light to which the colours are subordinated often to the verge of extinction; instead of the greatest perfection in uniform execution, his technique is sometimes delicate, sometimes bold, full of conscious liberties and inequalities, but always subtle and individual. Instead of painting the outer man, he paints the soul in

man ; instead of the simple rendering of the situation and direct realism of the Van Eycks, everything with him is life and feeling.

Rembrandt is a Dutchman through and through ; we can only understand him when we think of him in Holland and in connection with Dutch painting. And yet he is more : he goes far beyond Dutch art and culture ; he represents a high-water mark in the development of all art. In this sense it has been justly said of him that he would have discovered painting had it not been already discovered. For while Dutch art was divided and every artist merely accomplished something in his own special department, Rembrandt looked on art once more as a whole, attacked its highest problems, and the solution which he found is a new one and is more profound than any discovered by art before or after him. His subjects are indeed not new. His Biblical motives, his mythological representations and genre scenes, we find in his predecessors, especially in his masters. Their conception of genre is the same as Rembrandt's ; the figures in the pictures are also mostly small and placed by preference in the middle of a landscape. Rembrandt even borrowed the Oriental costumes from them, and merely adapted them in his way and to his purpose. But the manner in which the artist expresses all this is most personal and individual. All his countrymen, even the best of them, only give us a piece of Dutch life and Dutch country, which they represent with the greatest fidelity and perfection. Rembrandt alone goes beyond this ; he raises what is peculiarly Dutch into a world of his own, transports us into an undreamed-of wonderland. We admire a Ter Borch, a Pieter de Hooch, a

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Jacob van Ruisdael, or a Paul Potter, for their artistic power of delineating with inimitable truth and delicacy a small section of Dutch country and people; but Rembrandt's greatness consists in his detaching himself from all this, in giving his representations a universal, human character, in surrounding them with a halo which makes them appear as coming from a higher world. Fromentin appropriately calls him "the great thinker who, without living apart from the artists of his own country, is in no way closely connected with them, never repeats them and yet represents them all, who apparently paints his times, his country, his friends and himself, but, in reality, only paints a corner of the human soul, till then undiscovered."

Rembrandt is a realist, like all Dutchmen of the great period; indeed, in his presentment of reality he even surpasses his countrymen. He goes further than they not only in the fidelity and understanding with which he grasps and depicts life, but also in the directness with which he presents it in all its common forms and expressions, nay, even in all its repulsiveness and brutality. Almost all his personages are simple or homely, and not a few may even be described as ugly. He delineates the people precisely as he saw them around him, stunted in figure as a consequence of the heavy northern dress and of the hardships of their lives, mean and commonplace in type, with an expression which tells of sorrow and suffering. For his genre pictures, as well as for his representations from the life of Christ and the history of the patriarchs, even for his mythological compositions, he took his models from his immediate surroundings, his family, or his acquaintances;





REMBRANDT  
OLD LADY  
NATIONAL GALLERY

*To face p. 6*



and primarily from among the poor Jews of the quarter where he had his house and which he seldom left. Though his heathen gods and goddesses, when on rare occasions he does represent them, are thus partially devoid of their classic traits and their original character, he yet understands how to impart to them a peculiar charm in virtue of their physical robustness and the brilliant tone of their velvety skin. But his master-stroke was to bring the Bible story into this everyday world. While raising his representation of religious subjects far above commonplace reality, he at the same time remained in sympathy with the simple form and profound contents of the story. Rembrandt is the first, in a certain sense the only painter, who has interpreted the Bible in the spirit of the Bible. He boldly brings the sacred story, to quote Hotho, "not only into homely domestic life, but straight into the peasant's hut, in order to give new life to the miracles of Scripture by the miracle of his brush." His scenes from the New Testament are not pathetic renderings of the life of Christ or the Apostles, like Giotto's; they are not classically conceived scenes, like Masaccio's or Raphael's; but they are the clear announcement of the religion of love, of the gospel of grace and salvation, which can be the portion of the mean, and even of the unhappy; and most of his figures are thus poor and miserable. Christ and His disciples, who came of the poorest of their people, turn to the people, and live and work among them and for them. When Rembrandt harks back to the people in his pictures, when he depicts the Saviour in the form of a servant "who hath no form nor comeliness," he is merely in harmony with the spirit of the Bible. The simple truth of his repre-

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sentations, the honesty and depth of his feeling, speak as clear and eloquent a language as the words of the Gospel; the spirit of love and mercy shines forth from all his renderings with such piercing vitality and convincing fervour as to make all other pictorial presentments of Biblical subjects appear cold and colourless. Italian art knows the Gospel only through the medium of the Church; Dutch art, thanks to Rembrandt, derives its knowledge straight from the Bible. The former pranks itself in the stately antiquated raiment of the Catholic Church, the latter in the modest garb of the Protestant *bourgeois* of Holland.

Rembrandt knew his Bible by heart. We may state this almost as a literal fact, though we have no written testimony for it. His mother had imbued him with love of the sacred Book, her Book; when he paints or etches her he likes to show her with the Bible on her lap. In the little library which is cursorily mentioned in the catalogue of his sale—an event so melancholy in its significance for the artist, but of the utmost value to us, since this inventory speaks eloquently for the artist as well as for the man—besides “fifteen books of different sizes,” only one “old Bible” is specially named. In his pictorial *exegesis* of the Old as well as of the New Testament Rembrandt follows the text more closely than any other artist. He is the only one who observes a number of delicate little traits; he alone endeavours to render the local character and the surroundings of his subject. His paintings and etchings, and above all his drawings, acquaint us with innumerable motives which no other artist has ever found in the Bible. We could by their means compile



REMBRANDT  
PORTRAIT OF HIMSELF. 1658  
IN THE COLLECTION OF MR. HENRY C. FRICK, PITTSBURG

*To face p. 8*





an illustrated edition of the Bible which would surpass in fidelity and depth of feeling, as well as in wealth of representation, the Biblical illustrations of all other artists put together.

How far Rembrandt was orthodox is a question which his familiarity with the Bible is not alone sufficient to determine. The Holy Scripture was the book he had grown up with. Its narratives had filled his imagination when he was a child; they had become part of him; he thought only in terms of the Bible, and created with it and from it. In a thoroughly naïve manner, it is true, without scrupulous regard to accuracy, but also without taking special interest or part in the dogmatic subtleties which then violently agitated most circles in Holland. People have wanted to make Rembrandt into a sectarian. From a statement of one of his biographers it was imagined that he must be a Mennonite, because he painted and etched the portraits of many important members of the sect; but the artist painted many other Dutch ecclesiastics with whom he came in contact through his wife, Saskia van Uylenborch, a near relation of Dutch theologians. From the fact that he had his children christened and buried in the State Church, and was buried there himself, and from the evidence of such ecclesiastic documents as mention him, we have every reason to believe that he was a member of the Church. We should be quite unjustified in regarding Rembrandt as a champion of dogmatic squabbles, even though in his time they were not considered as such, but rather formed an integral part of public life. It would be equally false to consider him a Freethinker, or even an Atheist, as the Romanticists did in their wish to make him

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out a gloomy Republican. We know, indeed, now from a number of rather unedifying documents that Rembrandt, in consequence of his passionate temperament and strong sensuality, occasionally came into open conflict with morality, and that he troubled little about the Church, or decorum, or reputation. Moreover, certain of his representations, such as the splendid etching of "Faust," and the fact of his associating with learned Jews and Catholics, show that he would not be circumscribed by dogma, but that he liked to think for himself in the highest matters relating to religion and philosophy. But we need not for this reason look upon him as a sceptic or an unbeliever. The artist never neglected his duties to the Church, and his pictures speak too simple and true a language even to admit of such a supposition.

No other artist has been so great an apostle of Christianity as Rembrandt. He has in no way robbed Biblical representations of mystical charm; his peculiar way of introducing light gives them a supernatural appearance which constitutes the characteristic power and attraction of his art; but he treats his subject in the simplest and truest fashion with his whole soul and from the depth of his heart, and this is the secret of his immediate and powerful effect upon us. According to Koloff, he translated "the original text of the Holy Scriptures into plain Dutch prose, and the wonders of the East became in his thought as well as in his pictures real local events and true histories." We understand this when we remember that the orthodox Dutch considered themselves the true people of God, and the immediate successors of the Apostles and the early Christians; they thought they





REMBRANDT. THE MILL  
LORD LANSDOWNE'S COLLECTION, BOWOOD



lived according to the old Christian traditions, and therefore in a certain way looked upon the Bible story as the history of their own people. To them the episodes from the life of Christ and the patriarchs were true, historical pictures which might have been taken from their own political life or their everyday surroundings. In the "century of theology" religion was the central point of life; Jesuitism and Calvinism, the two opposite poles in which it was made manifest, and round which the spiritual struggle of nearly a century revolved, were glorified with pencil and brush at the same time, and by one and the same Teutonic race, which under different influences had developed in two opposite directions. Thus Rembrandt's descriptions of the Holy Scriptures are the loftiest expression of Dutch Calvinism, while Rubens' religious pictures and pictures of the saints give the most brilliant artistic form to the spirit of the Anti-Reformation or Jesuitism. Protestantism celebrated its greatest triumph in Rembrandt; religious painting found in him its last genuine and at the same time most inspiring interpreter.

The artist, Janus-faced, saw not alone supernatural but all other motives with piercing realism though transfigured by a peculiar light. In his portraits, indeed, absolute truth to Nature seems to supplant this characteristic element of light. Nearly one-half of them resemble the pictures of the Dutch portrait painters of his time. They are simple in conception, the figure is seen in uniform daylight, the execution is sound and solid, the drawing precise, the characterisation happy and unaffected. But in his portraits of himself, as well as

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those of his relations and acquaintances, which he never executed with this severe repression of his own artistic imagination, we see that the artist only abandoned his own treatment of light and painted like others when especially desired. But when he was given a free hand he sought in portraiture also for his own mode of expression, a mode unknown to all before or after him. He shows his sitters emerging suddenly from the surrounding gloom, bathed in the brilliance of an illuminating ray of light. He not only wants to give a striking likeness of the individual, but also to portray his soul. Not a corner of his heart shall be hidden from us. This visionary conception is also peculiar to his landscapes; perhaps they tell most plainly how entirely Rembrandt differed from all other painters. Instead of painting the landscape he saw in his own home—flat, with a distant horizon and high sky, light, and bathed in the sea-mist—he creates a gloomy and solitary scene by taking high ranges of mountains, thick groups of trees, and heavy thunder-clouds; or he depicts the twilight mood of approaching night fantastically illuminated by some bright gleam, or by the last rays of the setting sun. The elements, the irresistible powers of cosmic life, speak to us. And yet it is an intensely personal converse which the artist holds with Nature. He watches its moods, he brings them into closest connection with our human feelings.

Rembrandt's art is thoroughly subjective. He expresses his deepest feelings in his works, and even his interests and experiences. His life and thoughts are therefore reflected in his pictures and etchings. He painted what he loved and valued, and chose motives in harmony



with his moods. Critics undoubtedly hit the truth when they connect such representations as the "Sacrifice of Manoh" with the expected birth of his son Titus, the "Sacrifice of Isaac" with the death of one of his children, the Biblical and mythological brides with his own betrothal to Saskia. A closer acquaintance with his works actually gives us an unexpected insight into his life and personal relations, and brings invaluable confirmation and illustration to the mass of documental evidence which Dutch research has gradually brought to light. His house, his home, in all its intimate details is thrown open to us—a life without splendour, without the recognition and honour which to-day seem to us inseparable from the work of a famous artist. Here are more labour and sorrow and darker shadows than in the career of most other painters, even of inferior merit. But the isolated gleams of sunlight which penetrate this darkness are all the warmer; they give us the picture of the man in that captivating chiaroscuro which in his works so brings home to us what he represents.

Just as no other artist ever painted so many pictures of his family and friends, so also no other has left behind him anything like as many pictures of himself. The reason was assuredly not self-conceit. He was, it is true, fully conscious of his own worth; but the man who lived only for his art had no foolish vanity—the conception of most of his portraits of himself testifies to this. It has been said, not without reason, that Rembrandt preached in them "Know thyself." He does this, indeed, in his own way, by attempting to work out in his own features his psychological and artistic problems, and thus to find

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their solution. In these pictures of himself, of which nearly a hundred have come down to us in paintings, etchings, and drawings, we can follow the artist, almost year by year, from the beginning of his artistic career till the end of his life. They lay bare before us the complete development of one of the greatest painters of all times, the life-study of one of the most profound observers of the human heart.

His delight in depicting his surroundings, his friends and relations, flows from his feeling for domestic life, from that love of home which really determines the depth and strength of his art. "Begin at home, and then, if you can, take in the world," Goethe cries to the artist, in speaking of Rembrandt, and herein he recognises the true source from which the master drew his inspiration. He drew from this source his truth and warmth of expression, his depth of feeling, his touching and convincing power of narration.

Rembrandt owes what he has become to a rare and happy combination of genius with industry and resolute endeavour. The enormous number and the variety of his works prove that wherever he found himself he observed and studied as an artist, that a restless craving to produce possessed him from his earliest youth. We know that from the beginning he pursued his purpose consciously and consistently. For this we have the classical testimony of Constantyn Huyghens, who wrote his opinion of the artist when the latter was only twenty-five. But with all his industry and understanding he would not have produced such remarkable work so early had he not been gifted with an imagination of rare creative power. The

thinker and poet in him surpass the painter; indeed, occasionally they lead him astray by tempting him to treat fantastically simple motives which only admit of a plain and realistic treatment. Even Rubens is inferior to Rembrandt in power of invention and creation. Rembrandt often repeats the same subject a dozen times and more in paintings, etchings, and drawings, but he almost as often makes it into an entirely new picture. In his drawings we can watch the artist as he takes up the same motive again and again, till he believes he has found the form best suited to his idea; we see him essaying the most diverse renderings of the same subject, but from the first always making a picture.

This conscious endeavour, the full individuality of the artist, are also manifest from the beginning in his means of expression. Even in his earliest works it is pre-eminently through the medium of light—his peculiar chiaroscuro—that his ideas find expression, though in the course of years he profoundly modified this medium, and made it more subtle and effective. The admiration which has always been felt for Rembrandt's chiaroscuro is perfectly justifiable; even if it was only a means to an end, it was the means by which he worked his wonders. Only through his chiaroscuro was he able to disclose all the hidden treasures which his seer's eye discovered in Nature. Rembrandt has been called a magician. He is a magician in the sense that he knows how to give to the fantastic images of his thought-world an artistic expression, which compels our credence, which carries us away and fills us with enthusiasm. He is a magician also in that he enthrals our senses by means of his magic;



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he conjures up his pictures before us as if with a magic lantern. "Rembrandt," as Koloff says, "carries a dark lantern under his cloak, which he suddenly produces and holds in our faces, so that at first we can see nothing for the blaze of light." His light is a peculiar one that suddenly falls full into the darkness, and streams out of it again just as warmly. With its rays and reflexes it calls up the rich play of light and shade, the bright glitter of the colours; at one time it obscures them, and then again allows them to shine forth gloriously and to glow in the richest tones; it is a light that seems to shine through and through, to betray the most secret thoughts, the most hidden feelings, to put the spectator in the most intimate connection with the subject represented. "Rembrandt only paints with the aid of light," as Fromentin says; "he only draws with light. He has a way of placing things at a distance, of bringing them near, of concealing or making them distinct, and of transforming reality into visionary semblance, which is true art, and above all the art of chiaroscuro." In this respect the French have called the artist a *luministe*, and recognise him as a man who discovered an individual method of lighting, and then gave it an exceptional importance in his art, and sacrificed to it other means of artistic expression.

If Rembrandt surpasses all other realists in his models and in his subjects, he is also the greatest of all idealists in his means of expression, above all in his lighting. His light is generally termed supernatural; not without reason, for ugly shapes, commonplace motives, are raised by his chiaroscuro into a higher sphere, and thus transformed into glorious works of art. Through this means of expression



he has become the most modern of all latter-day artists, since he has put the beauty of the spirit in the place of the antique beauty of form. His light is anything but naturalistic. It is neither sunlight nor candle-light; it is Rembrandt's own light. In his light effects he certainly started with the idea of copying Nature, which he studied uninterruptedly. But sunlight, as well as candle-light, as he endeavoured to reproduce them faithfully in certain of his earliest pictures, soon seemed too glaring and too insipid, the shadows too black and too opaque, to express the life of the soul as deeply and as fully as he felt it. Through study of the atmosphere he developed his light effects into chiaroscuro, into the art of painting things bathed in light and surrounded with air. His chiaroscuro can therefore be called "the art of making the atmosphere visible." Rembrandt's method of illumination has, indeed, little in common with our *plein air* painting; yet it is so allied to it in principle, and Rembrandt's employment of it is so marvellous, that, half unconsciously, our modern painters feel especially drawn to his pictures. Rembrandt's landscape drawings, in which he arrests his impression exactly as it came to him from Nature, are as transparent, as full of light and air, as the works of the most modern artists. But in his pictures, even in his landscape paintings, he wholly renounces this fidelity to Nature; for he wants to go beyond Nature and to give us a world of his own. His light is an indoor light, even when he paints an out-of-door scene; therefore Rembrandt was just as much admired and partly imitated by the tone painters, who were first heard of in the middle of the nineteenth century, as he is now by the *plein air* painters. Rembrandt studied

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his peculiar light in Dutch interiors ; but a comparison with the pictures of a Pieter de Hooch or of Vermeer of Delft shows how individually he saw. The warm, full light which illuminates the principal group, or, in a single figure, the head only, and makes it stand out clearly from the surrounding chiaroscuro, resembles the last rays of the setting sun as they stream in through a small opening into a closed room. The artist takes the glaring effect away from this light ; he softens, divides, diffuses it, gives it greater warmth, and allows its reflexes to light up the dark surroundings or the dark background in the most various ways.

Architecture and decoration are very remarkable in Rembrandt's works. In Italy also, at the time of the Renaissance, numerous painters were active as architects, and the buildings in their pictures are often so important and clearly constructed that they seem designed from monuments of the period. But the edifices that appear in Rembrandt's pictures can scarcely be conceived as actual buildings ; indeed, it would be difficult even to trace them out, so rough and vague are their forms. A distinct outline, any straight line, is absolutely avoided. These buildings, in which he certainly endeavoured—as in his costumes—to render the local character, recall the studied primitive architecture of our most modern painters, its shapelessness and massive effect, its tendency to the colossal and the mystic. His temples and palaces, with their flat domes and truncated towers, appear ruined and weather-beaten, or only half finished. At first he took his motives from antique buildings, as he knew them from the drawings and studies of his

teacher Lastman, to whose influence he owes much, not only in the design, but also in the composition of his pictures, and in sundry minor details. Later he borrowed architectural features from the late Dutch Renaissance, or from the Romanesque, more often from the Gothic art of his own country. But in doing this the artist permitted himself so much license that the pointed arches became round, the buildings lost their slender, upsoaring character, the towers their tops, the buttresses their pinnacles. All the greater is the effect of the rough masses of masonry. Above the intersection his churches regularly have a huge, flat dome, which, together with the shapeless, pillar-like towers on or near the building, are meant to represent the dome-shaped buildings of the Orient, with their minarets. By means of this peculiar architecture the artist strives, primarily, to heighten his pictorial effect. He creates strong contrasts by opposing to these inert masses a composition full of life and movement; he opens out wide, airy spaces with deep shadows and mysterious chiaroscuro.

Rembrandt follows similar artistic aims in his ornamentation, which is as remote from and as diametrically opposed to classic art as are his human figures. In the shapes and in the decorations of the furniture and vessels in his pictures, in the patterns and borders of the garments, in the framings, the artist adheres most faithfully to the fanciful scroll and shell ornament, which had developed north of the Alps, especially in Holland, at the turn of the sixteenth to the seventeenth century out of the Baroque-Gothic decorations in the style of Herri met de Bles, and later out of the grotesques of an artist like Floris. A strange medley of fantastic forms, which take shape now as fish, snakes,



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or molluscs, now, again, as hideous visages, and masks, and which appear, disappear, and intertwine among twisted scrolls that resemble waves, roots, shells, and straps, without any one form being distinctly worked out, covers furniture and utensils, forms the capitals of the columns and the pattern of the materials in his pictures. Wherever this ornament appears it primarily serves a pictorial purpose, by bringing life and movement into the crudely lit parts and shimmering lights into the half shadows. It is vague, formless, intangible, like the light in Rembrandt's pictures, the living expression of the artist's peculiar, rugged, undefined way of painting.

The chiaroscuro is so significant in Rembrandt that composition and drawing, as well as colouring and treatment, are dependent on it. It has no small influence even on his way of clothing and draping his figure, and on his choice of material. There are no classic folds in the gorgeous Oriental garments, turbans, and decorative accessories which he used for the costumes of the patriarchs and Jewish kings, but in the creases of the heavy gold brocade, in the borders studded with precious stones, the light scintillates in magic fashion and calls forth the most brilliant play of colour. If we want to understand the stages of Rembrandt's artistic development we must first of all follow out the development of his chiaroscuro. In his most carefully finished canvases or his hastiest sketches, whether he be working in strong colours or monochrome, his first preoccupation is the lighting, the chiaroscuro, and the effect he wishes to produce with it in his picture. In this the artist is as different in the different periods of his life as in the particular

purpose he has in view in each one of his works. Therefore in his earliest as well as in his latest periods we find finished by the side of sketchy pictures, and pictures full of colour by the side of others which are almost colourless.

Rembrandt's composition appears arbitrary only if judged by the standard of the Italian classics, for it is not constructed with lines, but with light. It has, therefore, its own laws. His spaces have great depths, and appear still more spacious by reason of the darkness in which they are lost. They are often packed with figures, but the action is always clear and harmonious. The artist knows how to introduce the spectator immediately into the scene of action and to arouse his vivid interest. Everything is in its place; everything, even apparently subordinate details, is related to the central point of the representation. At the same time his arrangement is extremely varied, according to the motive, the lighting, or the date of his works. Now he pushes the persons into the foreground, now he moves them back; he groups them in the middle or at the side; he allows a brilliant light to fall on the principal figure or principal group, or places them immediately beside the centre of illumination. In the latter case—think, for instance, of the "Night Watch"—he yet knows how to direct the eye at once to the intellectual centre of interest.

At one time Rembrandt was called a bad draughtsman, his colouring was criticised. But this was only possible because his art was not considered as a whole, and because his aims and methods were entirely misunderstood. Rembrandt is a draughtsman, in spite of Raphael and

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Mantegna, but he only allows his drawing to appear so far as is compatible with his effects of light and the expression he is seeking. No one has understood better than Rembrandt how to express a form, a movement, or a feeling by a few firm strokes ; how to arrange numerous figures in such a way that the composition is clear ; how to develop the action distinctly, to arrange groups correctly in space, to surround them with light and air and bring them, so to speak, within the sphere suited to them. We can observe this best when the artist works exclusively as a draughtsman, that is to say, in his drawings and etchings. They are also peculiarly interesting as teaching us how constructively the artist proceeded, how in every costume-figure he never lost sight of the shape beneath, and drew this first in its simplest form. On the other hand, Rembrandt is so much of a colourist that even when he seems to avoid colour—in his monochromes, as well as in his etchings, and even in his drawings—he betrays the subtlest feeling for colour by maintaining and emphasising the value of the tones. Rembrandt's drawing has, indeed, no clear contours, no grand folds. The light that falls into the picture dissolves the sharp outlines ; his chiaroscuro makes the lines indefinite. If in one place they are strongly emphasised, in another, close by, they are blurred. The art of his drawing, however, comes out in the individual way in which he observes and displays the laws of chiaroscuro.

The art of his modelling agrees with this. What first strikes the layman in Rembrandt's works and excites his admiration is its extraordinary plastic effect, unsurpassed even by Leonardo. The artist lets his people emerge from the darkness by means of a bright ray of light, and



endows them with such vitality that they seem to be in our midst. For a time Rembrandt took especial pleasure in straining this effect to the utmost by various expedients. He shows us his figures at an open window, or in a door, or makes them stretch out their hand towards the spectator. Later on he despised these artifices which aim at producing a strong illusion, and may therefore easily disturb the intellectual expression. A certain hardness of modelling, which still makes itself felt in certain earlier works, together with too sharp contrasts of light and dark, disappears in his fully developed art, and is replaced by the bath of light and air in which he steeps his figures; they gain their plastic effect through the fine gradations of light and an individual technique, especially by the thick laying on of colours in the light.

Rembrandt is no colourist in the sense of Titian or Giorgione, of Rubens or Velazquez, not even as Ter Borch or Pieter de Hooch. Assuredly his pictures glow with splendid colours combined in a peculiarly charming manner, which are unsurpassed in the paintings of the great colourists; but while with the real colour artists the chiaroscuro only tones down the clear local colours in order to give them greater variety and expressiveness, Rembrandt's chiaroscuro is directly prejudicial to the beauty of pure colours, which it modifies in the most diverse ways, in light as well as in shadow, breaks up, and even cancels. But even in pictures like these, which are the rule in his later period, Rembrandt is after his own manner a colourist. He operates here through sharp contrasts; he places different kinds of vivid colours side by side, and then connects and harmonises them by sprinkling them

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with innumerable little specks of colour, which are only visible at close quarters. In this way he takes from the brightest lights the glaring effect of the local colours, and gives a shimmer of colour and of clearness even to the deepest shadow. In his employment of colour, however, the artist proceeds differently at different periods. In his early period, in which he concentrates the light more and throws it full on the centre of the picture, his local colours are as a rule simpler and clearer; he then tones them off richly and variously, and lets them break in the shadow. In his middle period, in his striving after a uniform chiaroscuro, he allows the colours almost to disappear in a general brown tone, which appears steeped in gold. Later he goes still farther in the decomposition of the local colours and their admixture with a quantity of little, finely toned specks of colour, which make possible the subtle distribution of light and dark in the colours, and at once, by their contrasts and the manner of their combination, produce the extraordinary powerful colour effects of the whole. When, for instance, we examine in such a picture a material which, from a certain distance, calculated by the artist, has a splendid red effect, and then go close up to it, we detect little yellowish, brownish, bluish, blackish, and other tones introduced between or over the larger, more or less vivid red specks, according as light or shade influences the colour. Rembrandt pursues the same principle in the flesh tints, so that a head given in a strong chiaroscuro resembles, when seen close, a variegated kaleidoscopic picture. This was how the artist succeeded in rendering the full power and beauty of the colours and the chiaroscuro. In the apparent caprice in this rough



“daubing,” as it was formerly called, Rembrandt displays a knowledge of the appearance of the value and poetry of colour which only Titian and Velazquez possessed in their later years. At the same time, indeed, we find paintings in which, according to the motive or the individuality of the subject represented, the effect of light, or the poetic mood in the picture, the colours are carefully graduated and the local colouring almost clearly rendered—another proof of Rembrandt’s powerful artistic feeling and capacity. In his way he strove to do justice to every subject, to fashion every work of art in a new manner.

The peculiar treatment of the colours invests Rembrandt’s paintings with another distinctly pictorial charm. This treatment differs entirely from that of other painters; sometimes it is simple, but more generally most complicated and subtle. When he wished the colours to speak, he could so graduate, glaze, or lay them on as to give them a beauty, an enamel, which caused them to sparkle like precious stones. In this brilliancy and luminosity of his colours the artist has not been surpassed. Even the most important colourists among his pupils and successors, Carel Fabritius, Nicolas Maes, Jan Vermeer, and Pieter de Hooch, scarcely approach him in their most vividly coloured pictures. We must go back to the brothers van Eyck to find colours of similar beauty; but their pictures, in which they reproduce subjects seen in simple daylight, and accordingly painted throughout in uniformly brilliant colours, have not so intensive, so orchestral a colour effect as many of Rembrandt’s works, where the play of colour is concentrated on one single but generally not extensive portion of the composition, and where the effect is further

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increased by use of the most vivid light. The artist, indeed, obtains this effect in great measure by contrasting brilliant parts with deep or dull ones, and also by the light that falls into the picture; but the choice and preparation of his colours, his mastery in mixing and laying them on, have also much to do with it. Rembrandt's paintings, as well as those of the van Eycks, who from the beginning enjoyed the greatest reputation for this quality, prove how important in painting are beauty of material and knowledge of its preparation and treatment. Rembrandt's mastery and importance in this particular are thrown into strong relief by the epoch in Dutch painting which immediately preceded him, when the colour effect of the picture was primarily sought for in the values and tones. Modern painting, however, affords a still greater contrast; for, with little knowledge of pigment, or none at all, it works with inferior material, and has almost lost understanding for the beauty of colour as colour.

His manner of painting is as varied as his treatment of colour and light, and his artistic intentions as a whole. It is dependent upon them, goes hand in hand with them, is only the faithful and happy expression of his feeling. In the case of Rembrandt, as in that of most great artists, the characteristics of his early period are careful execution and shading of the colours, while those of his later period are an increasing firmness and breadth of pictorial expression. Yet in Rembrandt's artistic development we may also observe an extraordinary diversity of execution in the single paintings, and not infrequently in one and the same picture. There are pictures in which, in neatness of exe-

cution, he surpasses the great "painters in little"—a Dou, for instance, or a Mieris—and others, again, which vie with the most fugitive improvisations of Frans Hals in his last period, and in some parts even excel them. Rembrandt goes his own way here, as in all other artistic questions. It is because he feels and sees so differently from other artists that he paints differently, and finds means of expression which are as much his own as his conception of light and colour.

In transferring what he sees to a plane surface Rembrandt does not strive to copy the form of things, but to reproduce their effect upon the eye under the influence of light and dark. Therefore he endeavours to do justice to the rich gradations of light and shade in Nature by unceasing change of technique. This is accordingly sometimes careless and fugitive, sometimes extremely careful, and even laborious, but always so rich in contrivance that to imitate it invariably leads to mannerism, as the works even of his most talented pupils show. Nor have the attempts of any modern artists to follow in the steps of Rembrandt proved successful. His pictorial technique, wonderful as it mostly is, and much as it arouses the admiration of the painter, is so individual, so entirely inspired by the feeling of the artist, that it is only justifiable as being its expression. But there is no emotional experience that it would be harder to retrace.

We cannot completely appreciate Rembrandt's importance if we do not also think of him as an art collector and connoisseur. On account of the individuality of his works, he was formerly looked upon with the greatest injustice as

\* *I.e., Feinmaler.*



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ignorant of foreign art or as despising it. Rembrandt was, it would seem, at once the most subjective of artists and yet an admirer of every kind of art. He was not content with platonic love of works of art, but was a passionate collector all his life, and what he saw and possessed he made use of for his artistic purposes. As a collector and connoisseur he holds a similar position in Holland to Rubens in the Spanish Low Countries, or, in later times, to Sir Joshua Reynolds and Sir Thomas Lawrence in England. The artists of Amsterdam came to him to study his treasures and to learn from them, the collectors and dealers to ask his advice. The detailed sale catalogue of his possessions, compiled at the time of his bankruptcy, although certain of the principal pieces had already been sold in the years immediately preceding, gives us the best information about the artist's interest in this direction, and also acquaints us with the materials he made use of for his studies. There, to our astonishment, we see that he possessed numerous antiques, busts as well as statues, though these were almost exclusively casts; we find the artist in possession of paintings by Raphael, Palma Vecchio, Giacomo Bassano, a child's figure by Michael Angelo—or, at any rate, of works which he ascribed to these masters; we find, partly in proof impressions, all the engravings of Mantegna and Marc Antonio, besides those of A. Dürer, L. Cranach, Holbein, Israel van Meckenem, Lucas van Leyden, as well as engravings after P. Brueghel, Rubens, A. van Dyck, Jordaens, and others; besides numerous volumes with engravings and wood-cuts after Michael Angelo, Titian, Raphael, the Caracci, Guido Reni, Ribera, and others. The catalogue even contains works upon the

theory of art, architecture, and the costumes of foreign peoples. It is remarkable that among the paintings of his countrymen there are none of his pupils. On the other hand, he loved to collect works of landscape painters, especially of those whose sentiments were akin to his own, such as Hercules Segers, Lievens, Porcellis. Like Rubens, he was a particular admirer of Adrian Brouwer. The inventory further mentions all sorts of Oriental and other vessels, every kind of weapon, numerous natural history curiosities whose form or colours attracted him, and finally casts from Nature. Thus we see that Rembrandt, in just the same strenuous way that he studied Nature, strove to inform himself thoroughly about the wide realm of art, although, as a young artist, he had, with full knowledge of what he was doing, refused a visit to Italy as dangerous to his own individuality. He not only derived an indirect advantage from these studies—when we consider his youthful works we can judge of what value they were to him—but Rembrandt was not above occasionally borrowing a motive from another artist. The famous portrait of himself from the year 1640, in the National Gallery, and the similar etching from the preceding year are composed entirely in the manner of Titian's so-called Ariosto, and show, moreover, an acquaintance with Raphael's portrait of Baldasare Castiglione, which was sold by auction in Amsterdam about the same time as Titian's picture. We see that he borrows figures from Dürer, Mantegna, Correggio, that he makes use of a composition of Marten van Heemskerck; we see drawings of his after the most different artists, even after Indian miniatures and Italian medallions. In other works of his, too, we repeatedly find that he has

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borrowed from other artists. Very careful study is, indeed, necessary to discover this, for the way in which he assimilates what he has occasionally borrowed scarcely allows the thought to arise that such pieces are not exclusively his own.

The costume, also, which he invented and arranged after wise deliberation, is an important factor of Rembrandt's art. "His clinging to the very same objects, to the cupboard full of old household stuff and wonderful rags, made Rembrandt the individual artist that he is," says the young Goethe. In his Biblical and historical representations he is by no means so arbitrary and fantastic as appears at first sight. Rembrandt endeavoured to depict the character of the time and place with the utmost fidelity. He devoted much care and diligent study to the attainment of this object. Christ and his disciples he clothed in the simple "roquelaure" of the Amsterdam Jews. On the other hand, he imagined the patriarchs in the splendid garments of the Orientals of his time. In order to give as correct and at the same time as picturesque a rendering as he could, he strove to become acquainted with the works of the classic artists of his own time, as well as of the Renaissance—nay, even with those of the antique and of the Orient. Primarily he made his studies on the living models of the East, the Turks, Armenians, Persians, Southern Slavonians, even the Malays, whose dress, he thought, preserved the tradition of the time of the patriarchs. He tried to collect whatever was to be found in Amsterdam of gorgeous Oriental robes, arms, scarves, jewellery, and so on. He also acquired all kinds of things which appeared suitable for the dressing up



of his models, for the portraits of himself, his relations and friends. But in reproducing them he was as indifferent to any considerations but those of taste and the sentiment of his picture as he was eager for archæological exactitude in his historical works. The iron gorget which we so often see in the early portraits of himself, the beautiful iron shield with the Gorgon's head, the splendid gilt Renaissance helmet which his brother wears in the Berlin picture, the pearl necklaces, the ruby clasps, the bracelets, and other jewellery which Saskia and afterwards Hendrikje wear, and which he always knew how to arrange differently—all these things and many other curiosities filled his costume cupboards and his living rooms.

Though, with our present knowledge of the ancient Orient, we must perforce admit that the costume in Rembrandt's works is altogether wrong, it affects their worth just as little as the English local colouring does the Roman plays of Shakespeare. Goethe's remark upon this will also apply to Rembrandt's pictures. "They are men, men in every respect, why should not then the Roman toga suit them? When you have once got used to it, you will consider this anachronism highly commendable, and it is just this blunder with regard to costume that makes his works so lifelike."

We must consider Rembrandt in his entirety. Only then does he become intelligible and appear unsurpassed. Taken in detail, he shows many a hardness and roughness. There are even seeming weaknesses and defects, which are only the reverse side of his genius. He was not always successful in giving perfect artistic expression to his



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entirely new way of seeing things. Not infrequently he does violence to objects in his uncompromising individualism ; but even so his ideal is in the highest degree interesting and artistically significant. Rembrandt belongs to the mighty ones of the earth who must be measured by their own standard. Even that which now appears to us exaggerated or violent in his works, or approaching to caricature, is the genuine endeavour to give what is characteristic and great ; another age may view it with other eyes and find it less hard to understand. We cannot imagine his personality without an element of the mysterious and problematic ; with it is bound up the incentive to fresh study and the ever-increasing enjoyment of his works.

## FRANS HALS

It was the Haarlem patrician, Frans Hals, who raised Dutch portrait-painting—which had before meant simply the rendering of the likeness of an individual—into the region of great art. In his own time and in his native town he was thought highly of as an artist, but public estimation placed him after such painters as Miervelt, Honthorst, Moreelse, and others. When he died, at a great age, in the almshouse of his town, he had long been out of fashion; and since then he has been forgotten for almost two centuries. Only in the last generation have his portraits gradually won appreciation; only in the last few years have his great genre figures excited deep interest. To-day his name stands, together with Rembrandt's, at the head of Dutch painting, and his works command as high prices as the pictures of Rembrandt, Velazquez, or Titian.

However, we are scarcely justified in ranking Frans Hals with those masters who touched the summit of perfection in the pictorial rendering of the individual. He did not even attempt to give artistic finish to his composition. His style is masterly, but the actual material properties inherent in colour as a pigment are not always overcome. He did not always understand how to call forth

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the full charm of the colour, but gave too great prominence to the tone; it is this quality, perhaps, which attracts our modern artists and patrons of art. But with this reservation, which only affects his position among the greatest painters of every nation, it must be said in his praise that, next to Rembrandt, he was the greatest genius among Dutch painters, and that his influence on the development of the first period of Dutch painting was as important as Rembrandt's influence on the time following.

The earlier school of Dutch painting culminates in individual portraiture, which, in a certain way, takes the place of the historical picture. In the bitterness of the struggle for religious and political liberty against Catholic Spain, the Reformed Church had refused to tolerate any kind of pomp in the decoration of places of worship, and thus a crushing blow, which was long felt, was dealt to Church painting and even to religious painting. At the same time, through the struggle, the importance of the individual, and with this also his self-confidence, strongly developed. The burghers of the young Free State realised themselves as independent persons, as well as members of the numerous corporations, especially of the military guilds, where they were trained in the use of arms. Therefore the portrayal of the individual, and especially of the committees of those numerous guilds and various corporations, formed for public utility, seemed to them the most worthy task of art; their greatest artists devoted themselves to it. Among these artists Frans Hals enjoys the fame of having released the art of portraiture from all trammels, and



FRANS HALS  
OFFICERS OF THE CORPS OF ARCHERS  
HAARLEM





brought Dutch painting, in this direction, to its first great period of excellence. In the portraits and genre pictures—which have the effect of portraits—to which his art is confined, he displays such vivacity and freshness, gives such a speaking and immediate likeness, as no other painter has done before or since. The peculiar mixture of proud self-confidence and jovial love of life, which speaks from these pictures, was certainly a characteristic of the Haarlem burghers of that time; but if the artist had not possessed this quality too he would not have been able to stamp it as impressively and powerfully as he does on the faces of nearly all his models. Few painters have grasped form and character so faithfully and strikingly in their pictures as he has; but the special charm in them is, after all, the reflection of the artist's nature, of his cheerful view of life, of his inexhaustible humour. Even in the portraits, where the greatest objectivity is required, and seems indeed to speak out of the pictures, it is the same with Frans Hals as with all great masters: what gives the picture life, greatness, permanence, is what is put in by the artist himself.

The strongly marked individuality of his nation, which made Hals a portrait-painter, finds the fullest expression in his portraits: it is more strikingly conceived in them, more spontaneously rendered than by any other artist. He stamps them with his own individuality in the highest degree, but also gives them all the characteristics of their time and of their country without troubling to reproduce small external details. His pictures are therefore of historical importance: they give the personality; they show us a race with strong passions, highly developed

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egoism, but controlled and guided by a keen understanding, piety, and patriotism. The artist does justice to every character in every way; he characterises the bold, haughty youngster just as strikingly as the strictly religious, quarrelsome, Calvinistic clergyman, or the dignified Haarlem patrician; the beautiful girl in her rich dress is given just as gracefully or roguishly as the comfortable well-to-do old woman, or the children in their wild merriment. In nearly all of his extremely varied portraits—some of which are as small as miniatures, others large and decorative—the personality comes out as vividly as in the pictures of Rubens; but it is not shown, as with him, by heightened vitality and vigorous movement, but by an animated, humorous expression which seems to be excited by another person, and therefore appeals so directly to the onlooker.

The artist's particular gift, which we find in nearly every one of his portraits, of establishing a lively connection between the person represented and a supposed third, made Frans Hals especially competent and especially sought after as a painter of groups, in which he could express this heightened intellectual mobility in various ways, by the connection of the different persons to one another as well as to the spectator. The eight large pieces of the Military Guilds and the Regents, which are now together in a hall of the Haarlem Museum, are therefore justly admired as the highest expression of his art. The light chosen by the artist is simple daylight; but however gay the costumes may be, he disposes the local colours according to the flesh tints, subordinates the local colouring to the tone in which, in his pictorial rendering, he finds





FRANS HALS  
HEYTHUYSEN  
LIECHTENSTEIN GALLERY, VIENNA

*To face p. 36*



his most effective medium for the expression of his artistic feeling. The following words, which Houbraken put into Anton van Dyck's mouth with regard to our painter, show that this side of his art was always most striking and most admired: "He had never known any one who had such power over his brush that after laying on the portrait he could render the important touches in the lights and shades, and in the right place, with one stroke of the brush without blending or changing; the first stage in his portraits had the effect of an indeterminate blur, then followed the broad brush-strokes, as if the master said: 'Now the painter's handwriting must come in.'"

The Haarlem groups extend over the whole long period of his activity, over more than half a century, and represent every phase of his development, his drawing, colouring, and technique, in the clearest and most effective manner. Within this general type the manner of Hals is as different in the different periods of his long artistic career as it is distinctive and individual. At first the colouring is vigorous, the tone deep, the execution careful; then, in the twenties, the colour becomes rich, the treatment bold and broad, the light diffused; till, under Rembrandt's transitory influence, the local colours become subordinate, the light more concentrated, the tone much greyer. This general greyish tone, which is always characteristic of the artist, has at first a deep gold sheen, then it turns into olive-green; later it becomes more ash-grey, and at last almost black, but as a rule remains luminous and thickly laid on. And as the artist gets more and more sparing of his colours, so the representation becomes broader and broader, more and more sketchy. If we may judge of the mood of

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the artist from the tone of a picture, then the grey colouring of Frans Hals's last pictures betrays sad days and low spirits: a relic of the past, almost deserted by his friends, with no inner moral support, the world is grey for him; he will no longer give it its fresh colours, will scarcely allow it its natural form. His fellow-creatures only granted him the bare necessities of life, and so the old man, in his last pictures, especially in the famous Regent pictures from 1664, which he painted when he was eighty-five, only gives his figures drawing and colour enough to make them appear like living beings. And yet how life-like they are; what a mighty paw has thrown them on the canvas!

The power of personality gives to the art of Frans Hals an exalted position in his period, and at once makes it the centre-point of all artistic endeavours which then found their highest expression in the portrait, and more especially in the genre. The artist's importance as a genre painter is, however, almost equal to his prominence as a portrait-painter. His pictures, especially those of small size, have a genre effect, caused by the lively movement which characterises them. With real genre figures, where he was not obliged to represent a shape as it always appears, as he must in a portrait, he can fully display his art of rendering a sudden change of feeling, any passing moment of psychical agitation. Humour is for him the keynote of all expression, and this, as part of his own spirit, speaks out of all his pictures. The small number of character figures to which Frans Hals confines himself; the types seen in the Haarlem streets, as the fish-girls, the street boys, the "Rommelpot" players, the town crier in his





FRANS HALS  
PORTRAIT OF A LADY  
IN THE COLLECTION OF MR. GEORGE SALTING

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motley garb, the rowdy folk in the taverns; the young tipplers, the merry fiddlers, the coarse, low woman, and the old hostess; they are all animated by one spirit—by a joy of life, by a gaiety which Hals has represented in every form of laughter, from the clear, silvery laugh of the child and the simper of the beauty to the exultant shout of the flushed drinker and the hoarse cackle of the old harlot.

The whole is rendered with such ingenious freshness, such masterly firmness, that the spectator is compelled to laugh too. His character scenes from the life of the people—although when the artist takes several figures he does not yet understand how to represent them as a finished genre picture—are masterpieces in their way, unique and unsurpassed in freshness and liveliness of conception, in individual rendering, in pictorial breadth of treatment.

To grasp clearly the importance of Frans Hals as a genre painter we can scarcely do better than compare his works with similar subjects by the Utrecht genre painters, Honthorst, Terbruggen, or Bylert. The players, singers, and wenches of these Dutch successors of Caravaggio are theatrically dressed-up models who have no real home, in whose veins runs no warm blood. The bald, baroque manner of the conception, the mostly unattractive colouring and treatment, make us feel this doubly. How different it is with Frans Hals! The people whom he describes are certainly not over virtuous; but every one of his figures is taken directly from life and brought before our eyes with a plastic precision and a pictorial effect such as only finds its equal in the masterly manner of Velazquez. None

of those genre pictures of the Utrecht masters, which are so rich in figures and which portray the life of the people in Holland during the 'Thirty Years' War, give such a complete and impressive presentment of that time as these unassuming, single figures of Frans Hals. His itinerant singers and jesters, his pot-girls and tavern-keepers, his fishwives and herring-sellers, his "Rommelpot" players and boy musicians, are the popular figures of the streets and markets, the inns and public places of amusement in Haarlem. Every townsman knew them by their nicknames, the rollicking boys and girls followed them cheering or scoffing. As he saw them daily, so the artist in a few hours brought them on to his canvas faithfully and accurately, but with such naïve humour and picturesque mastery that the figure of the most ill-favoured wench, the most hideous drunkard, appears attractive.

## THE DUTCH GENRE PICTURE

THE genre picture has arisen on this side of the Alps ; here only has it found a real home and a brilliant, many-sided development. Its growth is not in public life, but in family life ; it can only expand freely where the latter is the basis of the life of the people. Only a free people can offer a field for its rise and progress, and that such exist is testified by the spirit of independence which is reflected in it. In the Netherlands and in Germany, at the beginning of modern painting, since the days of the brothers van Eyck, we find delight in the genre : the religious representations were wanting in the grand monumental character of the Italian art of that time, their pronounced characteristics were of the nature of the genre. The scene of the story of the saints was laid in the home ; the figures appear in the costume and with the features of the family. During the sixteenth century the regular genre picture begins to detach itself, mostly through the influence of Italian art, which the northern masters attempted to emulate in grandeur of style and elevation of expression. At first it is a description of the life of the people as seen in the streets and on the high-roads, in the markets and market-halls, street kitchens and houses of ill fame. The representatives of this tendency, at their head the great Pieter Brueghel, have little interest as



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yet in the individual, but rather in the great classes of the people as a whole, and above all in the lowest classes, whose life is lived openly and unrestrainedly, out of doors, in the streets and squares, and in the fields. They describe them in their various occupations, in their busy comings and goings; and what they give is an amusing picture-book with numerous little episodes rather than single completed actions.

After the separation of the Dutch Free States from the Spanish Netherlands the genre picture at once takes a special and prominent position in the now independent Dutch art. While in the Spanish Netherlands (even in the seventeenth century) the genre picture scarcely gets beyond the first stage, the more typical picture of peasant life, scarcely to be imagined without Dutch stimulus, we see here, through about two generations, the genre picture develop from the purely pictorial presentment of soldiers and peasants to the novel of manners of the upper classes. It is cultivated so richly and variously and by such a number of individual and remarkable artists that even the nineteenth century can offer no parallel to it.

When we examine the subjects of the Dutch genre paintings, we find—in contrast to the Flemish genre picture and to what the Romanic schools offer instead of the real genre—a distinct development from the typical to the individual, from the rendering of the outer appearance to that of the inner life, and, in the last stage, the return to the delight in outward show and typical scenes.

It is characteristic of the first period of Dutch painting that the artists paid no attention to the individual, but strove to depict the life of whole classes of society. They

chose the classes whose lives were lived in public, whose behaviour was under little restraint, and almost void of any consideration for others. They sought their subjects among the life of the people as the spectator saw it wherever he went: the comings and goings of the peasants and the poorest class of the population, in the village street or at the fair, in the peasant's cottage or in the ale-house. Along with these, the rollicking doings of the soldiery and their hangers-on, affording as they did gay and lively scenes, stimulated these artists to represent them pictorially. While Pieter Brueghel and his successors only render the doings of the country people generally and picturesquely, and mostly in connection with landscape, or with moralising or even allegorical allusions, the Dutch genre painters, from the beginning of the seventeenth century, strive to pick out characteristic situations from the life of the peasants, and to present them in a finished manner and with a more pronounced and individual rendering of the scenes and even of the single types.

By the side of this we find, as a new appearance in art, the presentment of the soldiers' life; it developed at the same period, and quickly became popular throughout the whole of Holland. With the first wars of liberty, and as a consequence of them, the soldiers had come into the country, Spanish troops as well as mercenaries who had been enlisted against them by the northern provinces. They were stationed in the towns during the winter, and in the devastated country there were continual and terrible scenes of fighting and plundering. The unaccustomed and picturesque spectacle which this new life presented was bound to attract the artists; for after the terrible and



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destructive struggle of the first years had worn itself out, and had made way for intermittent, petty hostilities, people at last became used to this unpleasant state of things, and took heart to observe the doings of the soldiery. Thus a number of artists in Holland—in the same way and at the same time as in the Spanish Netherlands—represent skirmishes, attacks, troops of cavalry on the march or reconnoitring, bivouac scenes, as well as incidents from the lives of robbers and marauders. The background for these is always some part of the native landscape.

Representations of the life of the soldiers in their winter quarters were still more popular. Their gay dress, their free life, attracted the painters, many of whom, together with the *jeunesse dorée* of the country, were drawn into their rollicking way of life. The catalogues generally describe the society represented in these pictures as “aristocratic society,” but the old Dutch catalogues of sales leave no shadow of doubt about the matter, as they briefly designate them “*bordeeltjes*” or something similar. At that time, indeed, the doings in these houses, which lay near the market and the principal church, were much more innocent than we generally imagine. They were the taverns and the *cafés chantants* of the present day. Many a harmless amusement, such as dancing, card-playing, drinking and smoking (which last was forbidden in many towns till the middle of the seventeenth century), could only be enjoyed by the pleasure-loving youth of Holland in such places.

With the rendering of the interior, in the pictures of the peasantry, came the feeling and interest for the

inmates, as well as for the inside light, the chiaroscuro ; and in the pictures of society there was developed the understanding for finished composition, pictorial effect, and delicate execution. Thus prepared, Dutch art advanced rapidly to the representation of the life of the different classes of citizens. In characterising the occupations of the single person the individual becomes more and more prominent. The art of Frans Hals was of remarkable importance in the development of the pictures of society, whereas, under Rembrandt's influence, the description of the lives of the citizens deepened into the intimate rendering of Dutch family life in all its homely simplicity and heartiness. The works of the great men of this school, who make use of Rembrandt's artistic means, especially of his chiaroscuro, represent at once the culminating point of artistic representation and the perfect development of the genre picture.

Dutch humour, from the very beginning, realised the comical and laughable side in the life of the peasants ; and it was the same in the case of the lives of the citizens. The descriptions of these gradually, and especially through Jan Steen, get a satirical character ; not to the advantage of art, which not infrequently verges on caricature, or becomes merely illustrative. The indiscretion with which intimate scenes of family life, when they have a comic feature, were now brought into notice, attracted the public more than delicate characterisation and artistic perfection. With the decline and demoralisation of civic life the genre picture eventually deteriorated into the indecent rendering of equivocal scenes, for which, however, the hollow pathos of the time demanded the mantle

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of Biblical or mythological stories. Here too art dies out, in the cold, superficial painting of material by which the figures again become empty, conventional shapes.

This development, which, from its first beginnings till its termination, comprises about a century, was achieved by innumerable single, fine gradations, and produced a crowd of individual artists. The example and weight of the great masters, primarily of Hals and Rembrandt, determined indeed the different directions and influenced their growth, but the strong individuality of numerous important artists among them brought about the many-sidedness of Dutch genre painting.

## DUTCH GENRE PAINTERS UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF REMBRANDT

NICOLAS MAES, JAN VERMEER, PIETER  
DE HOOCH

REMBRANDT's art was too individual, too subjective, and too profound to permit of any successful imitation in his own special domain, the presentment of Biblical motives. Among his pupils, therefore, only the landscape painters, and primarily the genre painters, occupy an independent and important position in Dutch art. His poetical portrayal of Dutch landscape, and his glorification of Dutch family life, as contained in his Biblical pictures, was well adapted to show his pupils how to represent the home landscape and everyday life. In the same way that Frans Hals determined the beginnings of the Dutch genre, Rembrandt's influence was decisive for the later, greater period of Dutch art; the most prominent genre painters of Holland are his pupils or have proceeded immediately from his school and are strongly influenced by him.

Gerard Dou, the first Dutch artist to produce works of careful and finished minuteness, entered Rembrandt's studio when the latter was only twenty-one. Dou was his pupil for three years; the master's art at this period determined



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the work of his whole life. The cool light, the subdued colours, the careful execution, the high rooms with the light falling into them—we find all these in his works in the same way as in Rembrandt's early pictures; but in these rooms there are no Biblical figures moving about, only homely Dutch citizens. Dou described them with the greatest love and care, in their everyday life and comfortable home, surrounded by all the knick-knacks with which they adorned their houses. The artist's conception is intimate, the treatment of the subject extremely delicate; but baldness and exaggerated care, a mass of detail, and the cool tone of the colouring do not kindle any real enthusiasm, any more than most of the pictures of his master—though they were certainly more grandly conceived—which were painted at the time when Dou was with him.

In the period after Rembrandt's removal to Amsterdam his conception, which aimed at pathetic expression and exaggerated movement, was not calculated to guide his pupils—of whom he had a great many just then—into the province of representation of genre. After the forties his art again moved in a direction which was favourable to the advancement of genre. At that time we find among Rembrandt's works those little pictures with Holy Families, representations taken from the legend of Tobias, the story of Samson, and similar Biblical descriptions of family life. A peculiar and supernatural charm rests upon them all; they are miracles, both in the rendering of the chiaroscuro and in the pictorial execution. A number of Rembrandt's pupils from this period devote themselves exclusively or occasionally to the painting of



genre—for instance, Jan Victors, Philips Koninck, Carel Fabritius, Heerschop, Hoogstraeten, and above all Nicolas Maes. The conception of the great master is transmitted eventually to the whole of Dutch art, and leads to a period of excellence particularly favourable to the genre picture. The great genre painters of Holland—Maes, Vermeer, P. de Hooch—belong to this period, and Metsu, the two Ostades, and even Ter Borch were affected by it; under its influence their art developed and expanded to its rare perfection.

## NICOLAS MAES

One of these great artists, Nicolas Maes, worked in Rembrandt's studio from about 1650. He is the only one who is positively proved to have been a pupil of that master.

We can follow the development of Maes, with the help of his dated paintings, from 1655, a year after his settling in Dordrecht. A little group of pictures, which have a character apart, are, however, probably a year or two earlier; they are a few genre pictures with life-size, or nearly life-size, figures, which show a strong affinity to his teacher's paintings of the same period. We are thinking of the two single figures in the Rijksmuseum: the young girl at the window called "The Reverie" and "Grace," a blind old woman who says grace over her scanty meal; both are of warm, deep, brilliant colouring, and display a delicacy of feeling nearly approaching Rembrandt's. Then follow some larger compositions with life-size figures, which have lately appeared in England;

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"The Young Card Players," in the National Gallery; the "Nurse," which was sold with the Galton collection; and "Children with a Goat-Carriage," belonging to Baroness N. Rothschild. They are all characterised by strong chiaroscuro, a powerful warm colouring, in which red predominates, and some yellow, and the treatment is broad, partly bold and rough. It is no wonder that those of them which have no signature were formerly considered to be Rembrandt's. Among these great pictures which were ascribed to his master we find many paintings also of old women either with the Bible in their lap, or reflecting, or looking before them. They compare unfavourably with his master's, the treatment being more elaborate and exact, the colour duller, the light more even. Lord Spencer at Althorp possesses a large picture of this kind, and there are a few others in the galleries of Leipzig and Budapest.

There is scarcely any pupil of Rembrandt's who approaches the great master so nearly as Maes does in this series of pictures; one weakness is, however, common to them all, and that is that they present simple motives on a large canvas with rough execution without the powerful and individual language of form with which Rembrandt renders similar genre pieces. Apparently the artist felt this himself; his paintings become smaller and remain so, with the exception of some portraits. In these small genre pictures which Maes painted between the years 1655 and 1665 he is at his best. He is, indeed, not always quite natural and unstudied in the motive here either; as, for instance, in the above-mentioned great picture of "The Grace" in the Rijksmuseum, where the touching effect is



P. DE HOOCH  
INTERIOR  
NATIONAL GALLERY

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sadly disturbed by the cat which is in the act of dragging the cloth from the table and, with it, the scanty meal. Thus, in "The Eavesdropper," in the Six Collection at Amsterdam (dating from 1657; altered repetitions from 1665 are in Buckingham Palace and in Apsley House), a little novel is related. The various original repetitions and old copies of this picture prove that the mass of the public was not very different at that classic time from what it is to-day: then too the chief interest was felt in the motive of a picture. These and similar paintings, however, are only exceptions; as a rule, the artist's genre pictures are of the greatest simplicity, and speak straight to the heart. In the corner of a modest room, in which only enough detail is given to characterise the surroundings and to enhance the colour effect, sits an old woman, absorbed in her Bible or bending over her needle-work, at her spinning-wheel or preparing her simple meal. In other pictures we see a mother at work with her children, a little girl watching over her sister in the cradle, or children sitting close together, half afraid of the imagined dangers of witches and nixies of which grandmother has been telling, and looking out innocently into the world. Sunny happiness shines out of the darkness of these pictures, quiet contentment and delight in work speak to us from them; a warm golden light and the brilliant red which dominates the few colours charm the spectator. A halo is given to the homely events in the everyday life of the lower classes; they are related with such simplicity and feeling that we are reminded of Rembrandt's portrayal of the peaceful family life of Bible characters. Maes also attempted Biblical motives, but as an exception; thus, his "Hagar's



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Farewell," in the possession of the Earl of Denbigh, approaches Rembrandt so nearly that it goes under his name; there are also some Holy Families, which, however, bear still more the character of genre pictures than similar representations of his master's.

Unhappily, the number of such pictures by Nicolas Maes is small; scarcely more than thirty are preserved. Rembrandt was still living when the Dutch lost their understanding for this manner of conception; the artist himself had no longer any feeling for it either. The latest dated picture of this kind known to me is from the year 1667, and this too is a free repetition of an older picture; there is probably none much later than this, although Maes lived at Amsterdam till the end of the year 1693. He had been obliged to earn his bread principally by portrait-painting for a long time, and during the last twenty-five years of his life he was almost entirely active as a portrait-painter. In these late works, which represent the sitter sometimes life-size, sometimes on a small canvas, Rembrandt's pupil is scarcely to be recognised: they show the elegant pose, adopted from Van Dyck; the manner of painting is soft and fugitive, the light pale, the colours have a coquettish effect. Their spirit is so far removed from Rembrandt's that, for a time, they were not even considered to be Dutch, and a second Nicolas Maes, the "Brussels Maes," was invented. But the persons represented, as far as can be ascertained, are always Dutch, mostly from Amsterdam. Besides this, the connection between this later period of the artist and his earlier paintings, especially in the small portraits of the earlier period, is easily traced. There is only one Nicolas



N. MAES  
OLD LADY  
BERLIN

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Maes, but he went the same way as all his countrymen who survived Rembrandt; they all sank into a feeble mannerism, which scarcely gives us an idea of the grand, masterly art of their earlier period, the period influenced by Rembrandt.

## JAN VERMEER VAN DELFT

Among Rembrandt's pupils and successors Jan Vermeer of Delft is the antipodes of Nicolas Maes. And both in manner and style he differs nearly as much from the art of the great master himself, whose pupil, Carel Fabritius, was his teacher. For he is a painter of the atmosphere of a cool, clear day, not of a sudden warm light. He does not like the concentrated, peculiar, supernatural light which Maes adopted from Rembrandt, but prefers the diffused and real light, as it appears in an ordinary way to every one, and this he renders with the greatest delicacy and highest understanding. Thus, with Maes, the colours are warm and golden, with Vermeer, cool and whitish; with the former the shadows are a dull brown, with the latter a delicate, transparent grey. Mastery in the observation of light, accuracy, taste, and the surprising way in which he makes use of his knowledge without parading it, have in our time, when the *plein air* painters pursue the same aim, made him into one of the most popular and distinguished of artists. The neatness of the execution and the beauty of the colouring, the amiable conception of the simple but pleasing motives made his rare pictures, even in his lifetime and during the whole of the eighteenth



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century, the most highly prized works of the Dutch masters of delicately executed paintings. A French aristocrat, Monsieur de Monconys, who visited Holland in 1663, tells us that he called upon the painter Vermeer at Delft on August 11, but that he had no pictures he could show him; however, he saw one by the artist at a baker's, which had cost 600 livres, although there was only a single figure represented. In spite of this Vermeer was not well off; occasionally, indeed, he was in want. In the second year of his marriage, when he was only twenty-two, he had to raise a loan. After his death, a trustee was appointed, as it was uncertain if the estate was encumbered with debt; his widow, too, was obliged to pawn the pictures in her possession. His early marriage and the large family which quickly followed—when he died, he had eight children living—may have had something to do with this necessitous condition, but the fact of his producing a few pictures, in consequence of the great care bestowed upon them, must also be reckoned with. We can only point out thirty with certainty as his, and these are spread over a period of about twenty years. As this number is much the same as that of the paintings mentioned in various documents, and we have various sources<sup>1</sup> to which to apply for information about

<sup>1</sup> The best authority for the criticism of Jan Vermeer's paintings is the list, given by G. Hoet in his *Catalogues*, i. p. 34, of twenty-one pictures of the artist's, with a fairly exact description. These pictures were sold by auction in Amsterdam on May 16, 1696, among 134 paintings by the most various masters, without the names of the owners. Up till now about fourteen or fifteen of these have been traced. It is thought that these pictures were left by the artist, and formed part of the twenty-six "Schildereien" which in 1676 were in the hands of the painter and art-dealer, Jan

Vermeer's works, we can take it for granted that there were no more. What we otherwise hear proves that he lived a more regular life than many of his contemporaries in Holland, and that the position which he occupied among them was a high one; he was repeatedly on the committee of the Painters' Guild of Delft, and was once its president.

He entered the guild on December 29, 1653; he had married the April before, and therefore had certainly been established as an artist for some time. The first, unhappily almost the only, dated picture we possess of his is from the year 1656, "The Proposal," in the Dresden Gallery. In its colouring and in the decorative simplicity of its execution it is a perfect masterpiece, but does not yet show us Vermeer in his developed individuality; the figures are life-size, the representation conceived in a more lively and pointed way than we are accustomed to find with the artist. For other works of his youthful period we must therefore start from this picture. Now, some years ago, a second signed picture appeared in the picture

Coelembier, of Haarlem, who probably intended to sell them by auction. It seems to me very improbable that the artist, who in 1663 had not a single picture in his possession to show Monsieur de Monconys, and who had such an enthusiastic admirer of his paintings as his countryman Dissius, should have such a considerable number of his works lying by him. The circumstance that after his death his widow pawned one of his principal pictures to her mother, two others to a baker, with the express condition of being allowed to buy them back, speaks against this. On the other hand, it seems probable that the nineteen "Schilderijen van Vermeer," mentioned among the property left by the printer J. A. Dissius, of Delft, in 1682, unhappily without any further particulars, formed the principal part of the collection of his pictures sold by auction in Amsterdam thirteen years later.

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market in London; it represents, indeed, an entirely different motive—a Biblical one; but it also contains life-size figures, and resembles the first in its rather rough—here almost exaggeratedly—broad conception. It is “Christ with Mary and Martha,” and is now in the Coets collection at Glasgow. It is distinguished from the Dresden picture by a more perfunctory, flaky way of painting; the arrangement and drawing are not so skilfully managed, but still it betrays a painter of rare talent and with an unusual eye for the appearances of light, which here—as in Rembrandt’s works from the end of the fifties—strikes us by its restless, spotted appearance, producing sharp contrasts of light and shade. With the help of this picture, several other paintings of somewhat smaller size have been recognised as Vermeer’s youthful works. One of them bore his full signature, which had once been changed into N. Maes. This is “Diana with her Nymphs,” in the Gallery at The Hague, where for some time it was ascribed to Jan Vermeer of Utrecht. At the first glance the picture betrays a pupil or a successor of Rembrandt; the colouring and the loose pictorial treatment remind us especially of Carl Fabritius, and as it is signed Vermeer we cannot doubt that the pupil of this artist is the painter of the picture. The vigorous colours, the preponderance of gold by the side of red, blue, and violet, the flickering light, the flaky, broad treatment, the half-light in which all the heads are seen: all this is characteristic of his early period. A further proof of this is the mythological subject—an unusual one for him—in which he closely follows the picture in the Berlin Museum by J. van Loo, dated 1648, and treating the same subject.



Probably the picture was painted during the lifetime of his teacher, Fabritius, perhaps under his eyes.

If we may look upon these pictures as having been painted in the years before the completion of the Dresden picture, and therefore between the years 1655 and 1656, two fancy portraits of a young girl are probably from the time immediately after this picture. The Hague Gallery possesses one, a legacy from Madame La Tombe; the other, which bears Vermeer's full signature, is in the Arenberg collection in Brussels. They already show the artist's developed style. The heads are surrounded by the brightest light, and are placed in a shaded grey half light before a dark wall; the delicate pink of the flesh tints as well as the pale blue and yellow colours of the costumes enhance the strong effect of the whitish flowing light. An inexplicable charm too is given to his works by the arrested and yet dreamy expression, and by the picturesque, flickering way of laying on the colours, which, however, blend so smoothly that the technique appears to us as a riddle. More perfect and true studies of *plein air* cannot be imagined.

All the other paintings, in which we see the artist in his full individuality, must have been produced in the twenty years lying between the completion of the great Dresden picture and Vermeer's early death. The number is, as we said, limited, and to judge from the enthusiasm which has long been shown for the artist, and the high prices paid for his paintings, it is not likely that this number will be considerably increased. The excellent French art-historian, W. Bürger (Thoré), to whom belongs the honour of being the first once more to draw attention



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to the artist, did indeed imagine that he knew a greater number of pictures, but in the excess of his zeal he has confused the works of very different painters, with similar styles or names, with those of the Delft master : for instance, the Haarlem landscape-painter, Jan van der Neer, the painter of architecture, Vrel ; also Pieter de Hooch, Koedijck, C. de Man, and others. At that time the study and research of Dutch painting were just beginning, and the prices paid for the artist's pictures were no higher than some thousand marks. Actually the number of original works since Bürger's essays in the *Gazette des Beaux Arts*, in 1866, has about doubled ; it amounts to some thirty pictures.

The artist is simple in his motives, almost bald, as scarcely any other Dutch painter. A few pictures show two or three intimates together ; a greater number contain a single half-length figure : a young girl, perhaps reading or making lace, sitting at the piano or at the dressing-table. Occasionally we find a scholar or a painter at work. The "Allegory of the New Testament," in the possession of Dr. Bredius at The Hague, stands alone in his work. It is characteristic of Vermeer that only a single figure is given here too, and this in the baldest manner possible represents the "Novum Testamentum." All these interiors the artist does not strive to render interesting by piquant or intimate conception, by beautiful figures, exquisite arrangement, or similar methods ; he is just as unpretending as he is naïve in this. Even the room, which Pieter de Hooch presents so pleasingly by means of complex lines,\* rich furniture, and peeps into

\* *Ueberschneidungen.*



*Braun, Clément & Co. Dornach, Alsace*

JAN VERMEER  
THE MUSIC MASTER AND HIS PUPIL  
WINDSOR

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the adjoining rooms, is as empty and plain as the room of a simple citizen of his time. When Vermeer, following Hooch's example, once or twice allows us to look into the next room, he does so unassumingly and not very skilfully. An instance of this is the young girl who has fallen asleep over her work, lately in the Rodolphe Kann collection, and "The Love-Letter" in the Rijksmuseum. His whole art rests upon the pictorial rendering, the faithful conception of the motive, and the piquant light—upon the charm of the colours and the treatment. As with Rembrandt and the numerous masters who about the middle of the century were his direct or indirect followers, it is the sunlight which lends the greatest charm to his pictures; but he does not, like Rembrandt, represent the effect of single shafts of light falling fully and warmly into the darkness, but that of clear sunlight, which fills the whole room and dispels the shadows. He therefore chooses light colours; preferably a pale lemon colour and a cool blue. To make the flesh tints more vigorous and coloured he likes to portray his young women with a big white cap or a white collar round the neck, and to let his figures stand out against a brilliantly illuminated light wall. He gives the picture depth and the colours cohesion by a bright Oriental carpet or a coloured curtain in the foreground; then he intensifies this glorious colour-concert by a bright marble flooring, a painted glass window, some large pieces of furniture, simply drawn, by pictures and mirrors, vessels and tools, a basket of fruit, and similar things which seem to have got there by chance. The technique is picturesque and smooth, and, in spite of its unstudied effect, carefully considered and carried out; in



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the strongest light the colours are roughly and thickly laid on, producing an illusion of actual material. When we stand before one of these pictures and try to form an idea of how the picture was produced, and of the work of the artist, we understand why Vermeer did not paint much. The single colour tone, his enamel-like gloss, his brilliant light and winning charm, has probably been used with such marvellous effect by no other painter since Jan van Eyck.

The artist has also attempted landscape painting—if indeed we can speak of attempt in connection with such a painting as the view of Delft in The Hague Gallery. This unique masterpiece impresses us all the more as it seems to have been the exception for the artist to occupy himself with landscape painting. In the sale of 1696 only three landscapes—the above-named among them—are mentioned: one of these has been lost, the other represents a street in Delft with a view on to the façade of a house with a gabled roof, in the Six collection at Amersdam. The Hague painting was sold for two hundred florins, an extremely high sum at that time. The buyer may have divined that he had before him one of the most remarkable landscapes ever painted. The general public, indeed, have only lately awakened to a knowledge of the value of this work, primarily through modern art. We are justified in saying that later landscape painting in Holland, and even partly in Belgium, has developed under the direct influence of this painting since its exhibition in The Hague Gallery. In tone and colour it is rather different from the interiors: the deep red-brown colour of the brick buildings with their blackish-blue tiled roofs determined the artist to give



JAN VERMEER  
VIEW OF DELFT  
THE HAGUE



the picture a warmer tone, and this he increases by the colouring of the late afternoon sky and its reflection in the broad canal. The boats are painted deep blue, and some dashes of yellow here and there add further to the wonderfully harmonious, brilliant, and vigorous general effect of the colours.

With the exception of Vermeer's few youthful works, which are altogether different from his later ones, it is difficult to classify his works according to the time of their production, especially as we find not a single dated picture after 1656. To judge from the costumes, the smoother way of painting, and the colder colouring, such pictures as "The Party," in the Brunswick Gallery, the similar representation at the Bürger sale (1892), "The Astronomer," in Baroness Alphonse de Rothschild's collection in Paris (dated probably 1673), and others belong to his last period, while the pictures of brilliant colouring with the colours laid on dry and thickly, as "The Milkmaid," in the Six collection, "The Letter-Reader," in the Rijksmuseum, the delightful "Letter," in J. Simon's collection in Berlin, the "View of Delft" at The Hague, were probably painted soon after 1656. It is important to notice that even if all the pictures have not the same high degree of excellence, their artistic worth on the whole does not decline, as is the case with Maes and Pieter de Hooch in their late period. Certainly a remarkable sign of the power and individuality of the master !



## PIETER DE HOOCH

Pieter de Hooch is generally mentioned together with Nicolas Maes and Jan Vermeer. He is, indeed, a connecting link between the two. Was he not their contemporary, and did he not live a long time in Amsterdam and Delft as they did? If he was not Rembrandt's pupil, he was so strongly influenced by his works that he must be mentioned among his successors by the side of Maes. Bürger still believes in his direct descent from the great master (*"peut-être decouvra-t-on quelque jour qu'il a travaillé chez Rembrandt, ou peut-être chez Nicolas Maes?"*); but not only do Houbraken's statements contradict this; the latest discoveries in regard to the artist's life, and, above all, his youthful works, are opposed to this idea.

The life and fate of Pieter de Hooch afford a striking example of the small estimation in which artists were held in art-loving Holland of that time; of the small understanding, too, which the mass of the people had for real art. The artist was the son of a butcher in Rotterdam; he was christened there on December 20, 1629. We first meet the young painter in 1653, when he was "painter and footman" in the house of the merchant, Justus la Grange, a rich adventurer. No fewer than ten "Schildereien" by the artist are mentioned in this man's collection, unhappily without any details about the subjects represented. De Hooch probably lived alternately at The Hague and Leyden with la Grange. However,

in 1655 he seems to have left his service, for we hear that on April 12 of the preceding year he had become engaged in his native town, Rotterdam, to Jannetje van der Burch, a young girl from Delft. After the marriage, which took place in May, he moved to Delft again. The first child was christened in the following year. A second child was born in November 1656. On September 20, 1655, the artist had become a member of the Delft guild, to which he still belonged in 1657. We meet him again some ten years later in Amsterdam; according to documentary evidence, he must have been living there three years. The dates upon his pictures show that he was alive in 1677; he must have died soon after.

Houbraken tells us that Pieter de Hooch's teacher was Nicolas Berchem. We are induced to believe his statements by the particulars he gives us about this artist, which are partly confirmed by existing documents, also by the circumstance of his mentioning, as a fellow pupil, Jacob Ochtervelt, who was a relative and countryman of de Hooch's, and of the same age. To judge by the great number and diversity of his pupils, Berchem seems to have carefully fostered their individuality. There is no trace of Berchem's manner in Pieter de Hooch's paintings, not even in those youthful works, which formerly were not generally recognised as his. They show an influence from quite a different direction. He represents guard-rooms and interiors with soldiers and young girls playing, drinking, or chatting, as in the pictures of *Duyster and Kick* in Amsterdam, *Dirk Hals* and *E. van de Velde* in Haarlem, and other painters. Pictures of this kind appeared in nearly all the Dutch

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towns in the twenties and fifties. We find such pictures in the possession of Herr Alexander Tritsch in Vienna, in the Borghese Gallery and the Galleria Corsini in Rome (from the Torlonia collection), in the Dublin Gallery, the Hermitage in St. Petersburg (No. 943, "Matinée d'un jeune homme"), and in Dr. Hofstede de Groot's collection at The Hague. Among these pictures the "Guard-Room" in Dublin bears the full signature. Till now, all these pictures were mostly unrecognised, as they differ considerably in their motives from the later works, yet, on looking at them more closely, the connection in style and the transition from one group to the other is easily demonstrated. They are broad and to some extent careless in treatment, the light strong and rich, the colouring vigorous. Generally speaking, a bright lemon-colour and white is characteristic of them; to this is added a vigorous red, a dirty grey-black, brown red, and occasionally some blue tones. The whole combines in a strong colouristic effect. The drawing is neglected, and, in consequence of the carelessness of execution, often inaccurate. There is mostly no art shown in the composition, the rooms appear empty and lack the charm of an arrangement rich in perspective effect, such as we are accustomed to in the artist's later works. Still less attention is paid to delicate expression or intimate grouping; like the older society painters, the artist will only give a pictorial rendering of the piquant doings of the soldiery and their female followers. He foregoes the crowding together of numerous figures, foregoes the splendid materials and the pleasing accessories, with which artists like Dirk Hals or W. Duyster make their paintings so effective. He is



much more occupied with the problem of studying the effect of the sunlight when falling on strong colours, and occasionally solves this with real genius. This he does in the picture "The Guard-Room," in the Borghese Gallery, a masterpiece of colour, whose attribution long baffled criticism, or in the "Lever de l'Officier" in the Hermitage, which in its delicate, rich colouring, in which red predominates, and in the execution of the magnificent interior, nearly approaches the pictures of his best period. Light and shadow, as he portrayed them in his later works, betray the master; and so too, in these early works, we meet some models known to everybody from his most remarkable paintings—above all a young woman (is it the artist's wife?) who appears in "A Dutch Courtyard," in the National Gallery, in the "Afternoon," in Buckingham Palace, in the "Family Scene," in the Germanic Museum, and in several other pictures from 1658, as well as in many of those early pictures. It must have been such youthful works which adorned the collection of Herr Justus de la Grange in 1655. Their striking affinity in style with the paintings of Rembrandt and his pupils from the end of the forties renders it probable that Pieter de Hooch was working in Berchem's studio when the latter was living in Amsterdam. The motive may have been taken from the above-named society painters, whose manner of painting was influenced by Rembrandt; but in pictorial effect de Hooch far surpasses his models.

Our artist's most beautiful pictures, those masterpieces which are almost more sought after to-day than Raphael's or Rembrandt's, were painted in the years after his mar-



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riage, while he was living at Delft. If his youthful works betray the influence of masters belonging to Rembrandt's circle (should de Hooch have also spent his youth at Delft, we naturally think of Carel Fabritius), his development to full mastery of his art was consummated at Delft under the influence of, and in competition with, Jan Vermeer, who was slightly his junior. Several paintings from this period, especially those with rather larger figures, such as the interior in the Salting collection and the family in a garden outside Delft in the Academy Gallery in Vienna, approach him so nearly that they have long been ascribed to him. Others again, and mostly those with simple motives, remind us immediately of Nicolas Maes, for whose pictures they have often been mistaken: for instance, the room with a young woman and a child by the bed, in the Berlin Gallery, and similar paintings from the Mildmay and Adrian Hope collections which were sold by auction some years ago and went to America. But the artist is recognised here—in spite of the warmer tone, and the preponderance of red in the colouring—by the richer scale of colours, the brighter sunlight with its various reflexes, and the characteristic types, which lead us to suppose that these comfortable rooms are his own home, and the figures those of his wife and children.

Pieter de Hooch is not so intimate in his conception as Maes, even in these masterpieces of his prime. He rarely shows us his figures at work; they are generally amusing themselves at a game, drinking, resting comfortably, or sitting together chatting. He does not show us their faces distinctly, does not allow us to look into their hearts as Maes does. With the latter an intense ray of light falls



TER BORCH  
LADY PLAYING THE LUTE  
CASSEL

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full upon the faces of the principal figures, leaving the surroundings in darkness; (with de Hooch, diffused, bright sunlight fills the whole room, and envelops the heads of the figures in an indefinite glow. It is the charm of the sunlight which enchants us so in his pictures, and this makes the motive, however simple and unimportant it may be, cheerful and sympathetic.) The warm beam which falls through the high window divides, breaks, and reflects here and there in the whole room; everywhere it penetrates, even into the farthest corner; the outlines melt into soft tones. How cosy the room is in the half light! But the artist knows how to enliven by means of contrasts. Outside the door, through which we look, is an open space, either the courtyard, or a street in dazzling sunshine, and the glow is reflected on the comfortable and peaceful room.

(The bright, diffused light brings out the local colours, of which the artist is not sparing, brings them out richly and splendidly.) In nearly every picture we find lemon colour, red, and blue; and besides these there are an almost pure white and a deep black, which make the light appear more vigorous, the colours more pure. The beauty, harmony, and diversity in the combination of the tones, the variety shown in the introduction and diffusion of light, and the delicacy in observing its effect upon drawing and colour, make every one of these pictures a perfect masterpiece, whose charm nobody can withstand.

Two groups of pictures can be distinguished one from the other during the artist's short prime, which comprised about the time from 1655 till 1665. One group, probably early work, shows a deep golden tone, with red and brown-



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red predominating, colours which, as we said before, remind us of Nicolas Maes. Others, like the beautiful interior in the Arenberg Gallery at Brussels, have a brighter, whitish tone; blue is the prominent colour, and in this they more nearly resemble Jan Vermeer.

In the same way as Nicolas Maes, Pieter de Hooch declined in artistic power considerably in the last years of his short life. In the second half of the sixties the motives become richer, but the light appears monotonous and the treatment bald. In the pictures we can assign to the seventies (the last known date is 1677), this changed conception becomes a weakness. The artist no longer gives simple scenes from the home life of the middle classes: he conducts us to marble halls and magnificent rooms where fashionably dressed young cavaliers entertain their ladies with music and singing, dancing and games. He sacrifices his individuality to the taste of the time, and by piquant representation and costume-painting endeavours to make up for what his pictures have lost in charm of light, beauty and harmony of colour, and liveliness of expression. To-day these glittering pictures of the gay and pleasure-seeking life of this shallow society seem to us doubly depressing.

## GABRIEL METSU

DUTCH art at the period of its greatest excellence produced a number of precocious talents, and among these Gabriel Metsu stands foremost. We know now that in the year 1647, when he was about sixteen years old, he united with various painters in his native town, Leyden, to establish a special painters' guild. When this was brought about in 1648 he was one of the first members. But still it took the young painter a comparatively long time to develop to full and entire individuality. His youthful works show that he tried his hand at many different subjects, and was influenced in various ways, till he found his particular province in the intimate rendering of the life of the wealthy *bourgeoisie*, and in this no other painter has surpassed him.

Metsu lived at Leyden till 1655. In that year he took up his permanent residence in Amsterdam. His father, a painter born in Flanders, had not been able to teach the boy: he died in 1633. According to Houbraken, Gabriel's teacher was his fellow-townsmen, Gerard Dou. If this was really the case, his pictures betray little of this master, his youthful works least of all, a number of which — formerly unnoticed or not recognised — have gradually become known to us. None of his pictures is dated before the year 1653, but still from their artistic

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quality, from the costumes and manner of representation, we can roughly distinguish the order in which they were painted.

The artist's earliest works, probably painted before the end of the forties, are two pictures, in the Hermitage at St. Petersburg and in the Liechtenstein Gallery in Vienna (at the present time kept in store or sold), both with rough Dutch brothel scenes. The execution is as careless as with Duck or J. B. Weenix. They remind us of these painters in their affected and yet rather awkward fore-shortening, and in the bright colouring. But Metsu is superior to them in composition and liveliness of conception; in the Liechtenstein picture his colouring is more vigorous. The pictures of the following years principally treat Biblical motives; we may therefore suppose that those early rollicking scenes were intended to represent Scriptural subjects. The Prodigal Son among the harlots was a motive made use of by Dutch painters from the sixteenth century in giving pictures of their times. Another picture of this kind—from the very picturesque treatment and skilful composition certainly painted early in the fifties—is “Poor Lazarus,” in the Strasburg Museum. It also has a rough, genre appearance, and, in conception as well as in construction, even in colouring, plainly shows the influence of Jan Steen, a native of Leyden, and somewhat older than Metsu. Other Biblical subjects, though they follow the text more closely, satisfy us still less, as they are cold and bald in conception, and mostly careless and indifferent in execution. This applies especially to “Hagar’s Farewell,” a picture of large size which was formerly in the Thoré collection in Paris (Lacroix Sale, 1892). A





G. METSU  
THE PAINTER AND HIS WIFE  
DRESDEN

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similar impression is made by "The Widow's Mite," in the Schwerin Gallery; the "Adulteress," in the Louvre from the year 1653; the "Woman at the Altar," in the Schönborn collection in Vienna (probably a representation of the penitent Magdalene, or an allegory of Faith); lastly "The Gold Weigher," from 1654, which was in the Demidoff sale at Florence in 1880. All these works, however, from an artistic point of view are vastly superior to the "Hagar." "Samson's Riddle" probably belongs to the same period; it is quoted by G. Hoet in a sale from the end of the seventeenth century.<sup>1</sup>

In most of these Biblical paintings Rembrandt's influence is apparent, not only in choice of motive, but also in conception, decoration, and arrangement. Whether this is owing to the artist's pictures, to visits paid by the young Metsu in Amsterdam, to the presence of Rembrandt's pupils in Leyden, where the great master had even then a powerful following, we have not as yet been able to decide. In the same years, Frans Hals, Rembrandt's very opposite in Dutch art, exercised a strong influence upon Metsu. The earliest picture which betrays an acquaintance with his art is one with life-size figures, in the possession of the Earl of Lonsdale at Lowther Castle: a fish-wife's stall with women marketing and fishermen. Rough and dashing, even carelessly painted in a light brownish-grey tone, this picture, in its lively conception and movement, reminds us of the technique in the two representations of the Prodigal Son.

<sup>1</sup> The picture with the representation of Christ appearing to Mary Magdalene, which has recently come to the Court Museum in Vienna from the Oppolzer collection, is one of the rare Biblical paintings from the latest period (1667), and appears more influenced by A. van Dyck than Rembrandt.

A similar motive, similar also in colouring and treatment, but very much more delicate in composition, was at Lessar's, the art dealer in London, in 1887 : a stall with a woman selling game. A dainty young girl in mourning has bought some fowls from a sturdy-looking person, dressed in bright colours ; round about lie ducks, a goose, and other poultry, which a dog is sniffing at. The animals are excellently drawn and characterised, the greatest Dutch animal painters could not have done them better. In spite of the extreme lightness of the grey colouring, some delicate local tones are still faintly visible. The breadth and firmness of the treatment remind us of Frans Hals's later works ; the expression of the figure gives us the first idea of the refined, amiable character draughtsman. Quite similar is a picture with half life-size figures seen to the knee ; in motive and conception it goes back to those scenes from the life of the Prodigal Son : a young couple sitting and drinking by a disordered bed, in the Warneck collection in Paris. In the rich colours and the delicate light-grey tone it is like one of Bega's light works, while the dashing treatment more nearly approaches the later works.

Among Metsu's works we find one constantly recurring motive, which has scarcely ever been represented by an earlier artist. It is the interior of a forge, and we see how the young artist, with his lively, passionate nature, and intense feeling, rapidly grasped what interested him, strove to bring it into artistic shape, found naïve pleasure in representing what he had seen, and turned the new impressions over in his mind till he had found the most fitting form for them. The strong lighting effect, and the

piquant chiaroscuro in the picturesquely furnished place, so strangely lit up by the fire, must have impressed him ; he made his studies on the spot, and employed them for finished compositions. We now know four such "Forges," which all belong to the beginning of the fifties, and have the broad, in parts careless treatment, the same tone-effect of the pictures described above ; the light-effect is, however, more finished, and they show in parts a pronounced chiaroscuro. The one in the Stockholm Gallery is still dull and lifeless in colouring, the drawing frequently weak. Two variations, which have repeatedly been offered for sale, are more vigorous and better drawn. One I have lost sight of, the other found its way to the Rijksmuseum. George Salting, in London, possesses the best, which has been carried out in the smaller scale of most of the artist's works. Metsu appears here as the perfect genre painter, both in drawing and in harmonious effect, as well as in arrangement and in the clever treatment of the picturesque place with its various tools lying about in confusion. The earlier representations are either slight sketches or have been worked up to make a (hitherto unexplained) mythological scene, as the Stockholm picture.

Metsu moved to Amsterdam about 1655. He was only twenty-five, but already a master who, though with varying success, had made many and different essays, and now, after his restless student years, began to concentrate himself upon his own special province. The impression made by Rembrandt's works and by his immediate associates—primarily Nicolas Maes—had a further favourable effect upon him. Paintings like "The Widow's Mite" at Schwerin, or "The Forge" in the Salting collection,



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judging from their pronounced chiaroscuro and vigorous colouring, were probably executed in Amsterdam. From the time of his residence there he painted almost exclusively genre pictures, and in these he nearly always describes the comfortable existence of the well-to-do burghers, who have been regarded with such wise and kindly eyes by no other Dutch painters. During the artist's first years at Amsterdam we still notice his Leyden manner: restless composition, hurried movement, and rough and careless treatment. "The Concert," a picture in the Perkins collection, dated 1659, and bought at a sale in 1893, shows this. Judging from the points of agreement with this picture, others, like the dashingly painted "Twelfth Night" in the Munich Pinakothek (the motive reminds us that the artist and Jan Steen had lived in Leyden at the same time), "The Lace Maker" in the Court Museum in Vienna, the so-called portrait of himself in the Beurnonville sale in Paris (1881), and many more, belong to this period. To this time we must also assign the beautiful picture in the Rudolfinum at Prague, "The Fish Wife," a picture of extraordinary depth of colour, with a delicate, blackish tone, and vigorous, spirited treatment.

Metsu had discovered himself about the year 1660, and to the following years belong various masterpieces. At first the artist still occasionally took his motive from the tavern or the street. He was so pleased with a particularly picturesque dress of the Amsterdam burgher maidens, also made use of by Rembrandt in drawings—a laced bodice with a red chemisette seen through, and the sleeves trimmed with fur—that he employs it (1661) in two pictures, which stand in intimate connection with one another, of a young

couple at breakfast, in the Karlsruhe and Dresden Galleries. Now and again he still gratifies his love of representing market scenes, stalls of game and fruit, and so on. The best known of these pictures are the two companion pieces in the Dresden Gallery from the year 1662. But such motives are the exception. In the few short seven or eight years left to him before his early death he, as a rule, painted simple scenes from the home life of the well-to-do Amsterdam citizens, without striving after effect, quiet in expression and movement, but perfect in the finished composition, in the delicate execution and colouristic charm, and not less so in the expression of comfort and home happiness.

Metsu, like no one else, knew how to present incidents from the life of the good Dutch citizens, with their simple joy in prosperity and their inner happiness, and of these scenes he makes perfect little masterpieces. He tells us of his steady-going, hard-working countrymen, of their hardly-won wealth after the distress of the long wars of liberty; only occasionally does he touch upon the over-refined and luxurious life which in a short time followed these happy years. They are the same motives which are described by other artists of his time, especially by G. Ter Borch and Frans van Mieris: a single figure, perhaps a young lady making lace, or playing on the mandoline, a gentleman at the piano, an old man sitting by the fire smoking his pipe, or an old woman reading the Bible; then there are more ambitious compositions of a young lady or young gentleman writing or receiving a letter; a dainty young girl at the piano instructing a youth; a gentleman pouring out wine for his lady; a cavalier bringing his

spoils of the chase to the lady of his heart ; occasionally there is a fuller subject, as the visit to a young woman in child-bed (R. Kann Gallery in Paris, 1661), or the family at a meal (Hermitage). As a contrast to these motives, in which the joyous time of youth, the happiness of love and young married life, are glorified, he very occasionally introduces a subject reminding us of the cares of human life : the doctor's visit to a sick woman, the anxiety of the maid over her unconscious mistress (in the Berlin Gallery, recently acquired from the Leuchtenberg Collection), or a mother nursing her sick child, as in the touching picture in the Steengracht Gallery at The Hague. But here too he does not confine himself to the representation of suffering ; he gently hints that the illness is not a severe one, that the patient is on the road to recovery. This intimate and yet mostly unstudied conception, the expression of comfort and cheerful happiness, distinguishes Metsu's pictures from the nearly-related work of Ter Borch and Mieris, even of Pieter de Hooch and Jan Vermeer. In this Metsu approaches Nicolas Maes most nearly ; though he does not obtain his effects by the rendering of the sunlight falling into the room and by the chiaroscuro, as Maes does, but by delicacy of observation and drawing, by look and movement, by the whole fitting up of the room down to the dress of his figures, which in their fresh cleanliness and glow of colour help to bring about that peculiar feeling of comfort.

These pictures of Metsu's exercise a special charm by means of their delicate colouring and pictorial treatment. He had at first been entirely a tone-painter, so that some of his early pictures appear almost monochrome. Then in





G. METSU  
THE VISIT

IN THE COLLECTION OF MR. J. PIERPONT MORGAN

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Amsterdam, under Rembrandt's influence, he regained his delight in strong and rich local colouring, and in their harmonious combination he is a master. Sometimes he leaves the back of the room in darkness; then the colours are warm and deep and dominated by a beautiful red; sometimes, after the manner of Vermeer of Delft, and probably influenced by him, he lets pale sunlight fall into the room, and places his figures before a light, bright wall, as in "The Letter Writer" and "The Letter Reader," in Mr. Beit's collection in London, and in "The Sick Child," in the possession of Baron Steengracht; there the colouring is rich, with cool yellows and blues predominant. In the former pictures the treatment is light and sweeping, the brownish ground shines here and there through the half-shadows; in the latter pictures the manner of painting is shaded and smooth. But the artist's style never becomes stereotyped, he scarcely ever repeats himself, he shows us new beauties in every picture. Only in the last years his pictures are occasionally stiffer in arrangement, colder in colouring, and smoother in technique, in expression balder and more indifferent. This applies even to such good pictures as "Lady and Gentleman at the Spinet," in the former Schubart Collection in Munich, and the "Family Geelvink," in the Berlin Gallery; lesser pictures from this period, especially if they are not quite intact, leave us absolutely cold. When Metsu died suddenly, in the October of 1667, after a bungled operation, his art had begun to decline. We are reconciled to this early tragic interruption to a life of restless activity when we think of Goethe's words: "Providence wisely takes care that every man of genius completely fulfils his task, even in a brief lifetime."

## GERARD TER BORCH

TER BORCH is generally mentioned together with Metsu. The work of the two men shows great affinity; and yet in conception, as well as in treatment, there is great dissimilarity.

W. Bürger says of Ter Borch : “ Je ne sais pas, si après Rembrandt, on ne devrait pas le mettre tout à fait hors ligne, seul à son rang, comme les vrais grands hommes.” Eugène Fromentin claims this position for Jacob Ruisdael and Paul Potter; Jan Veth would like to raise Albert Cuyp to it. Others will perhaps mention Jan Vermeer or Pieter de Hooch in this connection. They are all right; the great masters of the Dutch school are, each in his way, so perfect, that it is a matter of individual taste whether precedence is given to the one or the other—Rembrandt, of course, excepted.

For Ter Borch's biography we were, till a short time ago, dependent upon Houbraken's untrustworthy statements. In an earlier work, therefore, I made the attempt, from the paintings and drawings preserved to us, to distinguish between what belongs to an older Ter Borch, what to our master, and what to his sister Gesina, and also to trace the peculiar course of the development. In the meantime and most unexpectedly, a well-stocked family album was found among property left by a descendant of

the Ter Borch family. This album found its way to the Rijksmuseum, and supplies reliable help for the artist's biography and for the history of his artistic development. What I had supposed has become certainty. The album is, at the same time, a valuable source of general information about the life of the Dutch painters.

Gerard Ter Borch was the son of a painter who, to earn his living, held also an official post. Old Ter Borch, who was born at Zwolle in 1584, was tax-collector in that place; his father had held the position before him, and shortly before his death (April 20, 1662) was able to hand it over to his younger son, Herrmann. We do not know who was old Ter Borch's teacher. The purpose of his journeys to Germany, Italy, and France from 1602 till 1611 was as much to study foreign languages as to perfect himself in art. On his return to Zwolle he married there Anna Lancelots Byfkens from Antwerp. The first child of this marriage is the celebrated Gerard Ter Borch, who was born at Zwolle at the end of the year 1617.

The artist's father was an excellent man, severe, but yet hearty and affectionate; a good Dutchman of the lower middle classes, whose horizon had been widened by his long residence abroad. A letter to his son Gerard which has come down to us, as well as his own records and those of his children, contained in this family album, and some other family papers, betray almost in every sentence the peculiarly close tie existing between father and children, and also between the children themselves. Old Gerard Ter Borch saw that his children had a thorough and many-sided education; their early lessons in art he



gave them himself. The engravings and drawings from his hand in the album show that he was very capable of doing this; we make his acquaintance as an able artist akin to A. Bloemaert, Lastman, and Moeyaert, but one who, with all his mannerism, betrays good understanding and naïve perception when brought face to face with Nature. He soon discovered the talent of his son Gerard, and preserved the boy's drawings when he was only eight years old. In these first drawings from 1625 till 1627 the son is of course quite dependent on the manner of his father, who, however, soon made him study directly from Nature: in 1626 he had to draw a male figure "naer het leven." In the following years the boy went out of doors and drew in the streets, in the market-place, on the ice, and, young as he was, developed a conception of his own. In such drawings young Gerrit approaches masters like old Claes Jansz Visscher and Hendrik Avercamp. Young Ter Borch was acquainted with the latter's works, probably too with the artist himself, for Kampen, Avercamp's home, was only two miles by road from Zwolle.

In the year 1632 we find Gerrit in Amsterdam. This we learn from the marginal note on the drawing of a study of a head from his hand. His father was clear-sighted enough to perceive the moment when his more talented son had outgrown his teaching. What master he confided him to in Amsterdam cannot be stated with certainty. As there are several sketches, with the dates 1632 and 1633, of "cortegaerdjes," of officers on the ice, and such like motives, followed by a whole series of undated drawings of similar subjects, we are inclined to

believe that one of the society painters—W. Duyster, S. Kick, or Pieter Codde—became young Gerard's teacher. The character of these drawings and of different paintings with the same motive, and now known to be by the artist, supports us in this view. Their cool, greyish tone, delicate colouring, flowing treatment, and arrangement as well as drawing, even the types themselves, nearly approach the earlier works of these artists, especially those of W. Duyster. They need not indeed all have been painted in Amsterdam; the only dated picture of this kind in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Ionides Bequest) is from 1638, four years after Ter Borch had left Amsterdam. It is, however, the most perfect, and therefore, probably, the latest of these paintings; the "Guard-rooms" in the Kunsthalle at Bremen, and in the possession of Herr Werner Dahl at Düsseldorf (sold 1905), as well as the similar picture under Duck's name in the Louvre (if these two last-named can really be attributed to Ter Borch), show in arrangement and drawing a more hesitating, less practised hand, so that we can place them some years earlier. Already in these youthful works, the works of a half-grown stripling, Ter Borch is superior to all actual "society painters."

The artist cannot have stayed long in Amsterdam, for a letter from old Ter Borch to his son, dated July 3, 1635, is addressed to England, and in this letter Gerard's residence in Haarlem, for the purpose of study, is spoken of. We learn from the same document that Pieter Molyn was his teacher there. This is confirmed by a dozen drawings by this master in the family album; they all bear the date 1634. His influence is also easily

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traced in a series of studies and drawings by young Ter Borch, some of them with motives from Haarlem and its surroundings, many of which bear the same date. Documents relating to a sale held in 1647, at The Hague, by the painter Jan van Goyen, inform us that Molyn thought highly enough of his young pupil to paint pictures with him; an important piece by Ter Borch and Molyn is mentioned which brought the considerable sum of fifty florins. The only painting from this Haarlem period which is certified by a date is "The Consultation," in the Berlin Gallery, from 1635. The figures in this little picture are eclipsed by the accessories—books, mirrors, death's heads, hour-glasses—which lie in picturesque confusion on a table. In the motive, as well as in the conception and arrangement, in the rather heavy, uniform grey tone and pictorial treatment, young Ter Borch nearly approaches various still-life painters from the school of Frans Hals, and especially the latter's son of the same name. From this we may infer a connection with the great Haarlem master, whom the artist, in a very different large painting of his later period, the "Fishmonger" in the Glitza collection at Hamburg, still seems to resemble in motive, composition, size, broad treatment, and grey tone.

Gerard Ter Borch is, according to A. van der Willigen, mentioned in the list of the Haarlem artists by Laurens van der Vinne in the year 1635; he was very probably accepted as a master in the spring of this year, although not yet eighteen years old. Immediately after he seems to have set out on his journeys, incited thereto by his travelled father. At the beginning of July 1635 he was



in London, where the careful old gentleman sent him a lay-figure. At that time A. Van Dyck was the centre of the artistic world here, and the favourite at court, and he certainly influenced the impressionable young artist, who in his later portraits vied with him in the aristocratic conception and bearing of his figures. Hendrik Pot may also have exercised a certain influence over him while in London, as well as before at Haarlem; Ter Borch's early portraits show a striking affinity to his small pictures.

How long Ter Borch remained in England, and where his wanderings led him when he left that country, neither lately discovered documents nor the sketch-book tell us. Houbraken, whose statements about him have turned out to be incorrect with regard to dates, but on the whole authentic in substance, only says vaguely that the young artist "toen hy op eigen wieken kon dryven reislustig weis, en vreemde landen heeft bezocht, als Duitsland, Italie, Engellant, Vrankryck, Spanje, en de Nederlanden." Clearly Houbraken did not intend to give the countries in the order in which Ter Borch visited them, for it is not likely that he went anywhere before his London journey. Six years after the letter from London we hear of him again in Rome, as E. W. Moes has shown. In the year 1641 he painted there the small portraits of Jan Six and a young lady (on copper), which are still in the Six Gallery at Amsterdam. In 1645 he had probably been back some considerable time from his travels. He was then living in Amsterdam. This we learn from a portrait of Caspar Barlaeus in the senate hall of Amsterdam University bearing the date of that year.



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That he returned to his home a finished master is most brilliantly proved by the famous Congress picture in the National Gallery, from the year 1648. His many and various studies, and his acquaintance with various prominent painters of that time in England, Italy, Spain, and the Netherlands, must have contributed to the development of his own full individuality. In my opinion two masters can be mentioned with certainty—Titian and Velazquez. His immediate model in his studies for the Congress picture was a painting of the Venetian's. The influence of Titian is primarily seen in Ter Borch's flesh tints. His pictures and those of Velazquez—different as they otherwise are—bear resemblance in the stately reserve shown in the characterisation, in the extreme simplicity of arrangement and surroundings, in the monochrome ground, in the delicate grey tone of the colouring, from which, as in the case of Velazquez, the pale pink or lilac of furniture-cover or table-cloth stands out, and in the clear black of the costumes.

A few words will suffice to tell of Ter Borch's outward circumstances after the middle of the forties. In the year 1646 he had gone to Münster, where the meeting of the most distinguished delegates from nearly all the European States offered him a chance of lucrative employment as a portrait-painter. He had made many acquaintances on his journeys; his father had been able to procure him introductions through his connections in Rome, Naples, and Madrid. The artist's expectations must have been realised, as he remained in Münster till the close of the congress in 1648; in these last years he completed the already mentioned famous picture of all the deputies,

which Sir Richard Wallace presented to the National Gallery. The Marquis of Hertford had bought it at the Delessert sale some years before for 220,000 francs. The sketch of another congress picture in the Louvre, the entrance of the ambassadors and ministers into the Gallery at Münster, for which the artist has only painted the figures, and an allegory—unhappily not preserved—upon the marriage of the Great Elector on December 26, 1646, are, as Moes points out, further proofs of the extensive activity of the artist, and of his connections with the most various and distinguished personalities during his stay at Münster. According to Houbraken, his acquaintance with one of the deputies, the Spanish Ambassador, Count Peñaranda, led, on the conclusion of peace, to the artist's undertaking a journey to Spain, where he is said to have painted King Philip IV., and to have been very handsomely rewarded. The last statement is indeed confirmed by the artist's nephew, of the same name, selling a gold medal of Philip's for seventy florins to his aunt, the widow van der Werff, in the year 1692; but our painter may very well have been in Madrid while travelling for purposes of study, and have painted the King then. It is certain that he was in Amsterdam again in 1648, and in December 1650 in his old home, and indeed at Kampen, where a payment is made him by the municipality.

On February 14, 1654, he married, in Deventer, Geerttruida Matthyssen; a few months later he had himself enrolled as a citizen of Deventer, so as to take up his domicile there. His election as member of the Common Council in 1666 he owed to the respect in which he was held; in 1667 he represented the magistracy of the town in the well-known

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Regents picture in the Town Hall of Deventer. In 1672 he painted Prince William III., whose portrait he afterwards executed twice. His death took place in the beginning of December 1681. On December 8 he was carried to his grave, the body being conveyed from Deventer to his birthplace, Zwolle, and there laid with much ceremony in his father's vault in the Church of St. Michael. He left no children.

We can follow the activity of the young artist during the thirties by means of a small number of pictures, but for the time from 1638 till his journey to Münster we have, till now, only scanty and insufficient aid in the two miniatures from 1641 in the Six Collection, also in the three small bust portraits of the clergyman H. van der Schalcke, his wife, and his little daughter, in the Rijksmuseum, dating from 1644, and in the above-mentioned portrait of Barlaeus from 1645. Ter Borch was summoned to Münster to paint portraits, and it appears that it was on his return from this journey that he first became principally active as a portrait-painter. He was on the way to becoming a miniature painter; not only the above-mentioned small portraits, the Congress pictures too, have, in the size of the portraits and in neatness of execution, a miniature character, and the guard-rooms and society pieces of his first period introduce small and dainty little figures, such as we find in none of the numerous society painters of the time. We cannot point with certainty to any genre pictures at all from the forties; but, judging from their character, pictures like the players in the Brockhaus Collection and the one in the former Dahl Collection, the boy who is looking for



vermin on his dog, in the München Pinakothek, and some similar paintings, can be ascribed with probability to this time.

Ter Borch, as a young beginner, had painted guard-rooms and military pieces, and he retained his pleasure in depicting scenes from the lives of the soldiers. We therefore see him, down to his later period, repeating certain motives, such as the sending of a despatch by the trumpeter, the delivering of a military report, officers talking or in the society of young beauties, and similar motives. These "ladies" with whom the officers are philandering are obviously not shy, but we should do the artist great injustice to suppose that his simple society scenes are regularly taken from the circle of the *demi-monde*. On the contrary, not only the decorous, distinguished bearing of the figures makes this improbable; we can prove that, as a rule, we have before us his acquaintances, his own family. For, thanks to the portraits preserved to us in the family album, we know that one of the constantly recurring figures is his sister and pupil Gezina, another, his brother Moses. We may therefore suppose a like relationship to the artist in the other figures of these pictures, and can regard them as his second sister Katharina, his brother Herman, and other near relatives.

The repetition of the types corresponds to the simplicity of composition, to the plainness shown in the representation of the room and its furniture. Nearly all Ter Borch's pictures are interiors: he takes us into his Dutch room, and shows us only a bare wall, perhaps adorned with a map, or broken by a fireplace; before it



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is a four-poster, in the foreground a table with a carpet and one or two chairs. The figures are given with the same apparent baldness and simplicity; there is little movement, the expression is quiet. This extreme reserve is entirely studied, and is united with a natural elegance and a certain grandeur which is in key with the choice costumes and their stylish fashion. It gives Ter Borch's pictures their aristocratic, distinguished appearance. Thanks to his unobtrusively aristocratic character, and his education as a man of the world, the artist knows how to depict his countrymen from a side none of his colleagues has shown us. They seem to have much cool dignity and elegance, but their society does not chill us; on the contrary, it arouses a feeling of intimacy and comfort, we feel at home in this world of quiet and easy manners, we are interested in what is going on, and, like Goethe, are tempted to read a novel into it.

By the side of this grave and artistocratic sentiment Ter Borch obtains his extraordinary effects by purely artistic means. He is as perfect in drawing as in colouring and pictorial execution; he is in this superior to all painters from the Netherlands. Here too wise moderation is the characteristic attractive feature of his art. None of his countrymen is so correct in drawing, so supple in accomplishment as he is; the artist, however, lays the greatest weight upon pictorial finish. In colouristic effect, in the harmony of the colours, Ter Borch, the painter of detail, perhaps corresponds to P. Veronese, the monumental painter. When the chiaroscuro is more prominent, it is for the purpose of giving a livelier effect to

the local colours. In the purity and beauty of these local tones he is unsurpassed. To display them in their full splendour he chooses the most costly garments : his satin robes are justly famous, but alike to plush, to fur, to carpets, to silver, he gives the appearance of the material, the beauty of the colour, with the same masterly skill, without our perceiving the work of the brush or the laying on of the colours, and without any trace of smoothness or sleekness.

We must look more closely at one of his favourite pictures, in which a white satin dress plays a prominent part, in order to see how he achieves this magical effect, what subtle means he makes use of : a number of various, delicate coloured tones, which are formed in the light and reflexes of the materials, are scattered over the surface, and unite in the most ingenious bouquet of colours. Many a careless spectator will be scarcely conscious of it, for the artist, with all the beauty of colouring, with all his clever calculations in the treatment, always makes the expression and situation suggestive. "The Concert," in the Berlin Gallery, where the 'cellist in the foreground sits with her back to us, cannot be praised highly enough for the unrivalled beauty of the colour-harmony, the delicacy in the treatment of the material ; and yet the faithful rendering of the figure in its magnificent clothes, the delicacy with which her playing is given, is almost more admirable. We imagine we know what her face is like, we think we hear her playing ; every contour is so correct, every movement so discreetly lively.

At the first glance we are somewhat disappointed when we contrast these pictures with the portraits, which were

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almost unknown a few decades ago, as they had remained in the possession of families at Deventer and Zwolle, where the artist lived. From there they have lately found their way into public and private collections. And yet they are about equal in number to his genre pictures. These portraits are almost entirely colourless. In their small size, in their preference for representing the full-length figure, the costume of one colour, and the bald surroundings, they have had as model the portraits of the older genre painters, of a Hendrik Pot, S. Kick, and W. Bartsius. But with Ter Borch this simplicity in arrangement, bearing, and colouring no longer springs from *naïveté* and awkwardness, as with the others; it is rather the result of acute and yet true artistic calculation. In this, as we said before, Velazquez was the master he followed. While Rembrandt and Van Dyck's art of portraiture affected him little, the Spanish court-painter determined his conception as well as his pictorial feeling. In the place of the honest, even rough, rendering of the individuality of those old Dutch masters, we find, with Ter Borch, a studied, almost subtle conception of the personality; the expression appears exaggeratedly cool and distinguished, the surroundings exaggeratedly simple. As with Velazquez, a table or chair is mostly the only decoration of the room; sometimes even these are wanting, and then, as with him, a line faintly hints where the grey floor detaches itself from the wall of the same colour. There is the same affinity in colouring: the persons represented are mostly in black cloth, more rarely in silk; if it is a coloured costume, the colours preferred are silver-grey and white, perhaps enlivened by a coquettish red or blue ribbon.



The covering of the chair or the cloth on the table is of pale red, greyish, or violet plush, for which Ter Borch shows the same predilection in his portraits as for satin in his genre pictures. He, like Velazquez, rarely represents bright colours; and the colour-combination, too, is of extreme delicacy in harmony and tone, which again finds its most striking counterpart in the great Spanish portrait-painter; for instance, in the two delightful portraits of a handsome young Dutchman and his wife, owned by Baron Gustav Rothschild in Paris, and the portrait of a lady in the collection of J. Simon in Berlin.

Ter Borch's artistic power remained the same till his old age, and this shows us that he, together with Rembrandt, was the most important, the most vigorous pictorial talent in Dutch art. Pictures like "The Music Lesson," in the Six Gallery, from the year 1675, or the portrait of a man in a sort of dressing-gown costume, in the Michel collection at Mainz, from 1680, are scarcely inferior to his best paintings from the fifties and sixties.

Those motives in which till quite recently he was alone known to us, and to which Ter Borch owes his great name, were painted in about the middle of the century, after he had settled in his native place again. Was it perhaps Rembrandt who gradually instilled into him a feeling for a grander conception, a broader treatment? We know that Ter Borch, after his return from his travels, lived several years in Amsterdam at the same time as Rembrandt. The older group of his genre pictures, painted till the end of the fifties, show this influence most distinctly. The full light falling into the picture,



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the chiaroscuro, the vigorous lemon-colour as principal tone in the colour scale, the rugged treatment when looked at in the light, make us feel that Ter Borch, with all his individuality, had in those years adopted from the pictures of the master what suited his tendency and his talent. It is too under Rembrandt's influence that he gains that ease of composition, that mastership in the tactful rendering of the situation, which distinguishes him before all other Dutch genre painters. There is hardly another artist who is so unassuming in his motives, so simple, even apparently indifferent in treatment and movement. His moderate-sized pictures mostly contain only two or three persons, often only a single figure. A young girl, playing or singing, accompanied by a young cavalier or another young girl; a lady, to whom a gentleman or a page offers wine, who receives a letter, or arranges her dress before the glass; a young couple calling upon acquaintances; the artist repeats such and similar motives with slight variations. Sometimes he permits us to guess by the expression of the gentleman who is paying a call, singing to the zithern, or giving a lesson, that he is interested in the young lady before him, but this is only a secondary consideration. The principal thing with him is the pictorial presentation of the subject. But it is through this that his most unimportant situations have their convincing truth, their most varied and delicate characteristic effect. This has led our greatest German poet to the well-known novelistic interpretation of the Berlin picture, which now goes by the name of "The Paternal Admonition." Ter Borch was certainly far from intending any such allusions, but it is indeed no slight



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praise for the artist that the characterisation is so sharp, the situation so natural, as to permit of such interpretation. Only the works of the greatest masters exercise a charm which extends beyond the limits of their art, a charm which excites a poetical or musical mood in the spectator.



## JAN STEEN

It is probably more difficult to form a correct judgment of Jan Steen than of any other artist of the Dutch school. Nor is it possible to sum up his characteristics in a few words, as his art scintillates in the most various colours. It has been judged very differently at different times. By his contemporaries it was thought little of: he was badly paid, was often in want, so that he tried to make a living by keeping a brewery, later a tavern—but from the eighteenth century, when Hogarth and Troost touched kindred notes, it has really become the favourite art of the public. This position has only been disputed lately, first of all by the orthodox preachers of morals, then by our artists, who will no longer acknowledge Jan Steen, no longer rank him with Ter Borch and P. de Hooch, still less with Vermeer. The mass of the public, however, is quite unmoved by this; Steen's "amusing" pictures remain the principal attraction in the galleries, and he has admirers who are of the same mind as the public, and who continue to pay high prices for his pictures, even if not so extremely high as for Vermeer's or de Hooch's.

The censures cast upon Jan Steen are not entirely unjustifiable. The artist is extremely unequal in his paintings, even if we except those contemporary copies which are made from his numerous pictures and regularly

passed off as originals. There are pictures of his which are so badly drawn, so inharmonious in colouring and unpleasing in tone, the motive occasionally so disagreeable, that we rarely find their counterpart among Dutch painters of the second rank. Added to this, his motives are often forced, he so obviously strains after humorous effect that he is inclined to pass the limits of the pictorial and to become illustrative. But a just and well-weighed opinion will not be led astray by all this—and so too the verdict pronounced by the history of art has remained much the same. Waagen says of him that “next to Rembrandt he was certainly the greatest genius among the painters of the Dutch school.” W. Bürger holds a similar opinion, and A. Bredius calls him “the greatest genre painter of the seventeenth century, one of the wittiest delineators of human follies, the character painter *par excellence*.” The weakness of the artist is hinted at in this high praise: he is too much, often even primarily, a poet; the invention and the motive often interest him more than the pictorial presentment. But still he is occasionally as excellent in artistic execution as the greatest of the Dutch genre painters. At the same time he exercises a personal charm as a many-sided, highly talented artist. He must therefore always be reckoned among the first Dutch masters.

Jan Steen is one of the most prolific and best known artists. We find his numerous pictures in all public and private collections. Old biographies tell us much about him, all kinds of documents relating to his life have become known, modern criticism shows a particular partiality for him; and yet there is still many a riddle to solve. Our

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appreciation of the artist and our knowledge of his characteristics can be rectified and extended in many ways; the history of his development has yet to be written.

Houbraken has much to say about Jan Steen, who indeed gives him the finest opportunity of telling farcical stories. Documentary evidence has proved that he was not badly informed as to facts: his authority was the painter Carel de Moor, a younger contemporary, fellow townsman, and intimate of Jan Steen. But, as usual, Houbraken has told his story superficially, furbished it up like a novel, and filled in details with the help of the artist's pictures. He partly acknowledges this himself. "His descriptions are like his way of living, and his way of living like his descriptions": this was his judgment of the artist. That Jan Steen was a dissipated genius, who only painted when compelled by want, that he preferred to keep a public-house and was his own best customer, are stories which Houbraken invented because of the rollicking subjects of the artist's pictures and the tales told by his older contemporaries about his humour. Documents, indeed, inform us that Jan Steen was just as badly off as most of the great artists among his countrymen, that he was just as tormented by creditors and by seizure of his goods; this, however, was not because he was too lazy to paint, but because he was too badly paid for his pictures to be able to support his family decently. When he died in his fifty-third year he left more paintings than any other Dutch genre painter: about five hundred pictures are generally spoken of, but the number is obviously too small; from old catalogues of sales we can prove that dozens of pictures have been lost. And this



rich output extends over the short period of little more than twenty-five years.

What we learn of the artist from documents is nothing for him to be ashamed of. After the death of his first wife in 1669, an apothecary, in the February of the following year, had his goods seized and his pictures sold to get the miserable sum of ten florins. Some years before that he had had to promise three portraits as payment of the high interest on a debt of four hundred and fifty florins. That he settled a debt at Delft with an old claim is nothing to reproach him with either. What Houbraken tells us of the way in which he is said to have won his wife Margrit, daughter of his teacher, Jan van Goyen, is—as documents prove—a disagreeable invention, or, as is more probable, a case of mistaken identity, as it was not he, but his brother-in-law, the painter Claeuw, who had to marry the second daughter of The Hague landscape painter rather in a hurry. Knowing the artist's position, we are not astonished at his applying for a tavern license at Leyden in 1672, and this being granted, that he had an "openbare herbergh" till his death. With his father, who was originally a brewer, he had formerly had a brewery at Delft, and a license to sell liquors went along with this. The right of brewing was at that time confined to several great houses, and used to be a privilege of the patricians only. Indeed the father, Havick Steen, was the descendant of an old patrician family at Leyden, where he lived as a respected merchant. As proprietor of the tavern we need in no wise think of the painter dispensing drinks behind the counter or sitting drunk at a table, even if—as is still the good old custom among tavern-



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keepers in the smaller Dutch towns—he either sat with his family in the big inn room among his guests, or received the guests into his family and associated with them. We will willingly allow that the artist occasionally drank more than was good for him, especially when his artist friends, Mieris, Lievens, A. de Vois, de Moor, and others gathered round him of an evening, but that does not justify us in representing him as a drunkard. When we pass in review the hundred and more pictures in which Jan Steen represents tavern life, we shall acknowledge admiringly that the artist made use of his time, that he observed the doings around him with philosophic humour and the open eye of an artist.

Houbraken refers us to Steen's pictures to gain an idea of his life and aims; he is certainly right in doing so, but they tell us something different from the biographer of the old Dutch artists. A man of Jan Steen's creative power and joy in creating, of his industry and ability, must have possessed great artistic qualities, but also great moral ones. That his works are very unequal, that he painted many inferior, even bad, pictures, is indeed a proof that he did not make the high demands on his own art that perhaps a Ter Borch or Vermeer did; perhaps he even indulged his inclinations more; but the great number of excellent pictures from his hand preserved to us also show that he possessed persevering industry and a great capacity for work.

There is scarcely another artist in Holland who has Jan Steen's imagination and gift of diversified plastic rendering. He is indeed a genre painter and remains one, even when he paints historical motives, but within this

apparently circumscribed province he does everything imaginable to vary his motive. He has represented in the most diverse and varied ways all the small and great events of everyday life in Holland, just as he observed them with his keen eyes. He accompanies man from the cradle to the grave, and describes joys and sorrows in the houses of all classes with inexhaustible delight in characteristic situations. He shows us the peasant in the tavern, smoking, playing, and drinking, dancing, or at bowls. But it is the townsman of the lower and middle burgher classes whose doings interest him most. He takes us into the street or to the market ; a wedding procession passes us by ; he shows us a fair, a noisy troop of street-boys accompanying the prize bull ; the throng before the tavern, where travellers are arriving and intoxicated guests trying to find their way home ; the return from market, an out-of-door picnic, a cats' concert by moonlight, performed by maskers before the house of the fair one ; gipsies telling fortunes, a poultry-yard where the little girl is feeding the fowls, and many similar motives. He allows us to see the artisan or scholar at work, the baker blowing a horn to announce that his bread is out of the oven, the fishmonger the dairyman, the dealer in old clothes, all calling out their wares, the clerk or notary at the desk, the alchymist, and especially the doctor, whom he shows us in dozens of pictures in connection with love affairs. But it is social life in Holland that he likes best to describe, and this he does frequently and with such diversity and vivacity as no other artist of any other people has succeeded in doing. He accompanies us to the sitting-room, the dining-room, into the kitchen and store-room, to the inn room and

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tavern, into the beer-garden, and not infrequently to houses of ill-fame. There is no Dutch national *fête* which he has not immortalised in pictures, just as he would have unwillingly missed being among the guests. As an enthusiastic lover of music, he gives musical entertainments and concerts, in the house and in the streets, with delicate and with coarse instruments. Popular festivals, cock-fights, the Prince's birthday, entertainments given by men of letters (the rhetoricians), dances and feasts of all kinds down to the wildest orgies, pass before our eyes in continually new and amusing form. But it seldom comes to a quarrel; only a few pictures show us brawls, fights where knives are used, or scenes of violence. And as the artist bears witness to his admiration for Bacchus, he does so yet more for Venus. In almost innumerable pictures Jan Steen has represented love scenes of all kinds and from among all ranks, where the actors are of all ages. He shows us every stage from the dawning of the first tender feeling to the most importunate erotic proposals; not infrequently he conceives an equivocal or even lascivious situation, but always delights us by his humour and delicate observation.

How the conduct of life of the elders is variously reflected in the behaviour of the children, how even in the latter the promptings of vice and virtue find lively expression, the artist has described with special pleasure and rare skill. The doings of the children at school, at play, in the nursery, and in the company of their parents and grown-ups, are the subject of numerous pictures in which his delicate, good-hearted manner, his love and his understanding for the child's heart, is



mostly far more apparent than his enjoyment of fun or mockery.

At first sight it must appear strange that with the artist's proneness to satire he has also produced numerous historical pictures, particularly those taken from the Bible story, and even mythological subjects and portraits. But a short enumeration of the subjects represented furnishes an explanation. We find many pictures from the story of the Jewish Hercules, Samson, from the story of David, Esther, Moses; then, from the New Testament, the sermon of John the Baptist, the marriage at Cana; from Roman history, the rape of the Sabine women and the "temperance of Scipio"; from mythology some subjects derived from Ovid—all motives, therefore, falling in with the artist's genre-like conception, and furnishing him with material for a jest, and primarily too scenes in which love again plays the principal part. The stories of Delila, Bathsheba, Cleopatra, the Sabine women he relegates, without further ceremony, into his Dutch surroundings, puts the figures themselves into Dutch costumes, so that such motives not infrequently appear to us to-day as parodies, which they were certainly not intended to be. In his rarer portraits, too, single figures, as well as family portraits, the genre character is strongly marked, the one and only portrait of himself, in the Rijksmuseum, excepted. In secondary things only he displays a talent which does not belong to the province of the genre painter: in the backgrounds of his landscapes, which often occupy a considerable space in the picture, and in the "still life" which he occasionally brings into the foreground, or in tavern scenes introduces on the tables.



Steen's skill in arrangement, his talent for composition are equal to his inventive gifts. He evidently had no academic scruples about the construction of his pictures, about the effect of depth, side-scenes, *contra-posto*, and so on ; but half unconsciously he obeys the laws of art, and works by means of them without our perceiving his intention. He loves compositions with many figures, and as they are full of sparkling life, he puts vigorous movement into his single figures, and yet the whole has a quiet and finished effect. He groups his figures cleverly, and understands equally well how to suspend the action at a certain effective moment, how to make all the principal figures take part in this, and how to use the secondary figures to characterise the place and subject. But in the individualisation of the single figure he is inexhaustible. Many of his figures, indeed, appear repeatedly, several very frequently, in his pictures, since he loves to take his models as well as his motives from his surroundings. In spite of this the wealth of different types in his innumerable paintings is still great enough, and among them are figures so delightfully true to life that they have the effect of real illustrations to the comedies of a Shakespeare, Molière, or Rabelais. We imagine we have figures before us like Falstaff, Poyns, Malvolio, and think of the play of wit of these characters as created by the great British poet. For the distinguishing mark which characterises him is humour ; it is really and truly the power which gives life to his pictures. It is not of so rough and yet good-natured a kind as Frans Hals's, not so overbearing and at the same time inoffensively superior as Brouwer's, but slightly pointed, satirical, and even moralising. The

moral, indeed, is not forced upon us by the theme itself, which only represents general human incidents; only occasional notes in an inconspicuous place point to a didactic, secondary intention. ("Soo d'ouden songen, soo pypen de jongen"; "hier helpt geen medesyn, want het is minnepyn"; "wat baeter kaers of Bril, als den Uil mit zien en will," and so on.) Sometimes such pictures do not rise above the level of careless or even coarse illustrations, but mostly his subjects do not impress us as being carefully thought-out moral lectures. The same thing may be said about his doctor scenes, which are often coarse. When he shows how the charlatan operates on the imbecile for "stone" on the market-place, the doctor examines the "water" with a thoughtful air, the dentist drags a peasant through the room in pulling out his bad tooth, the barber gives a stout young woman a clyster, or plasters for a young fellow the wounds sustained in his last fight; when he relates how the love-sick young beauty bemoans her imagined sufferings to the learned old gentleman, whose pointed hat marks him as a doctor, or when the latter endeavours to hint to a young married woman the reason for her complaints: here not only is shown his feeling for mocking and deriding people who allow themselves to be deceived and made fools of, but he enters into the lives and feelings of those who are laughed at, and often reveals his peculiar, hearty good-nature, which in many intimate family scenes and pictures of children arouses a like feeling in the spectator.

Humour is the artist's chief strength, but not infrequently his weakness also, as he easily oversteps the bounds, exaggerates the characteristics until they become a cari-

cature, and subordinates to this the claims of art, or else neglects them altogether. This is particularly the case with his secondary figures, which he places in the background in order to enrich the composition. They are mostly only sketchily indicated, and are rather types than individuals, as with Brouwer. But while the latter with a few strokes renders the form of such figures with great firmness and broadness, Steen's figures are too often out of drawing, and the execution slovenly.

Such carelessness and such faults are not infrequently disturbing in pictures which otherwise would be included among his most beautiful. At the same time, many of his paintings, have also from an artistic point of view, great weaknesses; they are apt to be discordant in colour, or the effect is impaired by a heavy chocolate-coloured tone. Happily, however, there is also a very considerable number of pictures which are executed in all their details in the most loving way, and are of the greatest charm in colouring and treatment. In such pictures we must compare the artist with the great Dutch genre painters to convince ourselves that he deserves to be mentioned with them. Strangely enough, he sometimes conspicuously approaches one, sometimes another, in the qualities of his painting, but without appearing dependent upon them. The assertion, which sounds like a paradox, that Jan Steen is best when he least resembles himself, can be successfully defended. There are small pictures of his with one or two figures: "A Young Girl at her Toilet," "Frau Margrit Steen at her Levée" (in Buckingham Palace and in the late Rodolphe Kann's Collection), "The Music Lesson" (in the National Gallery), and many others, in which the





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THE GRACE

IN THE COLLECTION OF MR. GEORGE SALTING

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artist shows affinity to a Gabriel Metsu or Frans van Mieris in the delicacy of the drawing, in the blending and beauty of the colours, even in quiet contemplativeness. Other pictures, as "Jan Steen at an Oyster Lunch," in the Neumann Collection in London (from the Hope Collection), and the similar picture at Lowther Castle, remind us of Pieter de Hooch's paintings in the sunny effect of the interior and the splendour of the material, while subjects taken from peasant life are on a par with Adrian van Ostade, as similar out-of-door motives make us think of Isack van Ostade. Some of his pictures even call to our mind Vermeer of Delft and Nicolas Maes. In the still life which the artist puts on the tables or in the foreground at his feasts he sometimes approaches a Gerard Dou, sometimes Willem Kalf, or his brother-in-law, Claeuw; but in the light, pointed treatment, in the richer colouring, and in the livelier composition, he differs also in such pictures from all other painters. The affinity with sometimes one, sometimes another, of those contemporary Dutch painters has wrongly led people to bring the artist into a certain relationship—either as borrower or pupil—with these painters, and hence to determine, or, more correctly speaking, to guess, at the course of his artistic development. As he was said to be the pupil of his father-in-law, Jan van Goyen, the pictures with a landscape background have been considered youthful works; the pictures from peasant life have been placed in the sixties, when he lived at Haarlem, and may have been on friendly terms with Adrian van Ostade; while his finely executed little pictures, in the manner of Frans van Mieris, have been ascribed to his last stay at his native town of Leyden (from

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about 1670), where he is supposed to have been a friend of Mieris. It has been thought possible, too, to arrange his works chronologically, according to their quality, by putting the sketchy and mostly rather monotonous paintings sometimes in the early, sometimes in the late, period. But there are quite early works which are excellent, as excellent as some from his later life, while the majority of his pictures, distinguished by composition, humour, and pictorial qualities, are from the sixties and during the time of his stay at Haarlem. This can be determined by the circumstance that it is just on pictures of this period that dates, though but rare on his works, are most frequently found. However, dated paintings from his earlier and later period are not altogether wanting; we know dates from 1653 to 1678, that is to say, up to shortly before his death in the February of 1679. The time when many of his pictures were painted can also be fairly exactly fixed, partly from the costumes<sup>1</sup> and the age of the members of his family, whom he so frequently represents.

From this I should conclude that Jan Steen—perhaps before his apprenticeship to Knupfer, whose influence occasionally appears down to the last period—went through a course of study in Jacob de Wet's popular drawing school at Haarlem. This is clearly demonstrated by many Biblical pictures, by the "St. John preaching" (called J. Asselyn) in the Castle of Dessau, probably painted about 1650 or still earlier. Youthful impressions of Haarlem, of J. de Wet, and especially of Isack van

<sup>1</sup> The time when Steen painted his pictures cannot always be deduced with certainty from his costumes, as he only rarely shows his figures dressed in the fashion of the time.

Ostade, are also apparent in the well-known "Fetching the Bride," painted in 1653, in the Six Collection at Amsterdam; in the nearly allied picture, "The Market at Leyden," in the Städelschen collection at Frankfort; in "The Fair," owned by Albert von Goldschmidt-Rothschild in Berlin; and in others. At that time Frans Hals too must have made a deep impression upon the young artist; and this is betrayed in his whole conception, in his humour, in the delightful laugh of his figures, especially of his children. A study, painted in the manner of Hals's workshop pictures, the "Rommelpot" players, certainly a very early production, is in M. Kappel's collection in Berlin. It is still carelessly and awkwardly composed in three half-length figures, but set down broadly and firmly, the principal figure quite like those of Von Jan, or Harmen Hals, or Judith Leyster.

At that time Steen had long been active as an artist; in 1648 he had helped to start the guild in his native town, Leyden. New impressions had influenced him here; the pictures of a Gerard Dou, of a Metsu and F. van Mieris were in his mind's eye when he painted works like "The Young Lady at the Toilet Table" (probably his wife Margrit), dated 1654, and formerly in the Rothan collection in Paris. His first family festivals: his "Twelfth Night," "St. Nicholas's Feast," and "The Bean King's Festival," must be from this and the following years. In them we see him together with his congenial young wife, his parents and children, sometimes with some relations and kindred spirits, in gay converse over a meal, or making music and singing. In one of these pictures, which has been in the possession of Ch. Sedelmeyer in Paris since



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1896, the couple are still young, the only child about two years old ; it therefore must have been painted in 1653. In the similar very delicate picture, in *Mauritshuis des Haag*, the charming boy who delights his parents with his flute-playing is already about seven years old, and there are two younger children ; and we must therefore attribute this to 1658, a date which also corresponds with the age of the parents and grandparents. Similar pictures are preserved from this and the following years, till in 1669 death summoned away from the cheery circle the most jovial, the most attractive figure, the wife of the artist. Only the year before, in the masterpiece of the Cassel Gallery, he had described her, delightfully fresh and easy-going, looking at her youngest boy, who as Twelfth Night King empties his glass like a man, while the artist, already portly, turns laughing to a stiff Philistine at the next table. The desolate husband soon after retired to his native town of Leyden, received permission in 1672 to open a tavern there, and a few months later, in the spring of 1673, married Maria van Egmont, the widow of a Leyden bookseller. According to Houbraken's statements, they both lived peacefully and happily, although their larder was often ill-stocked ; but as far as I can see the artist has left us no pictures of their life together.

From the numerous paintings which show us Jan Steen amongst his family in the house and in the inn room, and from the subjective nature of his conception, we can form a picture of the man which is very much clearer and more favourable than that furnished by bald documents and by the half-invented farcical tales of Houbraken. The artist's portrait of himself in the Rijksmuseum, the only



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life-size portrait from his hand, depicts him in about his thirty-fifth year, exactly as he speaks to us from his pictures. The small, sharply observant eyes, the Mephistophelian raised eyebrows, the powerful nose, the full lips, the half sarcastic, half jovial expression round the finely-curved mouth, are marks of a fresh and open nature, sensuous, full of strength and joy of life, full of the superior worldly wisdom of a Diogenes, and yet animated by genuine, good-hearted humour. Houbraken characterises him as open and obliging, easy-going and cheerful, and so he describes himself in his numerous works, in which he has represented himself sometimes as a humorous observer, sometimes as a cheerful guest amidst his friends and the members of his family.



## LANDSCAPE PAINTING IN HOLLAND

THE Netherland masters, who so early as the beginning of the fifteenth century—notwithstanding Italian art and by the side of it—established painting in the Netherlands as an independent art, already show a strongly developed feeling for landscape painting. Indeed the landscape backgrounds in the paintings of the brothers Van Eyck and their successors, as well as in the Calendar pictures and in the single presentments of the miniature painters of their period are unsurpassed in naïve fidelity of observation and perfect rendering of detail. In the northern provinces, Albert Ouwater at Haarlem—probably a successor of Van Eyck's—was particularly famous for the landscapes in his paintings. Till now, unhappily, we only know one interior of his. In the pictures of the early Dutch painters who come after him, Geertgen tot St. Jans and Lucas van Leiden, we can still admire the delicate feeling for landscape, the understanding for strong light and air tones, which distinguished their work above that of the Flemings. Hieronymus Bosch, and especially Pieter Brueghel, were also born upon partly Dutch ground. The landscape creations of the latter are as grand in design as his manner of viewing things was original. The poetic mood pre-

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vailing in them renders them harmonious. But the severe political tension which dominated the country interrupted this development before the middle of the sixteenth century. In the following decades the devastating war put a stop to any important pursuit of art in the Dutch provinces. The victories gradually obtained by the States over the Spanish armies, the rapid and extraordinary growth of the towns, and religious toleration, co-operated, towards the turn of the century, to induce a number of excellent artists from the Spanish Netherlands to take up their abode in the North. These emigrants, who left their country for their faith and found a new home in Amsterdam, were mostly landscape painters. Naturally they do not part with their Flemish characteristics even in their later pictures. Around them assembled a younger group of painters who had also mostly emigrated from the South and who belonged to a similar school. The forest pictures of a Gilles van Coninxloo, with their gigantic trees and mysterious gloom, the mountain-scapes of a Pieter Schoubroeck, where rich valleys and wooded heights are seen in an effective light, are indeed wanting in individuality, in correct effect of light and space, in pictorial treatment, but the poetic feeling in their world landscapes—though still impersonally conceived and crowded in composition—is not without influence on the later development of Dutch painting, particularly on the art which developed in Amsterdam.

By the side of this half foreign art, which is therefore often foreign in effect, Dutch landscape painting developed early and independently on a purely national basis: at first its growth was slow and hesitating, but from the

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second quarter of the century it became rapid and steady. Up to a certain point, and in the early stages, the development of landscape painting, as well as of still-life and genre painting, is connected with certain art centres in the country.

In the confined metropolis of Amsterdam the longing for free nature created the marine piece and the mountain-scape; at Haarlem people were full of enthusiasm for the beauty and colour of the scenery of the neighbourhood, with the bush-grown dunes and the view into the far distance; at The Hague, at Leyden and Dordrecht, the artists who studied by the sea and the broad river-courses gained an understanding of the delicate changes produced by the atmosphere in the appearance of the landscape: they discovered the tone landscape. But these local differences, which are difficult of themselves to recognise, become still more indistinct through the fondness of the Dutch painters, particularly the landscape painters, for travel. At the same time the attraction of Amsterdam, the metropolis, was over-powerful. And so the majority of the great masters gradually assembled here, and inevitably influenced the local schools of the neighbouring towns. The landscape school of the whole of Holland unites and works together to bring about a period of excellence which lasts more than a quarter of a century, until in the seventies, when the masters degenerated into mannerism and petty imitation, it suddenly and rapidly decays.

The truce with Spain in 1609 was like the touch of a magic wand upon national life; in art, too, the slumbering seed shot up with fresh vitality. Henceforth Holland has its own art, and the presentiment of the individual, as



## LANDSCAPE PAINTING IN HOLLAND 113

well as the plain, naïve rendering of the house and home, with all that the Dutchman loved and cherished in it, was considered worthy of representation. As the churches had to remain without ornament, the adornment of the citizens' houses was the principal task of the painter. His unassuming and unpretending portraiture of everything that was the proud possession of his countrymen quickly made painting popular; the artist's creations filled the most modest dwellings. Painters of the native landscape appear simultaneously, in the first two decades of the new century, all over the country, even in the smaller towns. Their small landscapes, oil-paintings as well as water-colours and finished drawings, which often grew out of the old pictures of the months and seasons, are bald and terse descriptions of Dutch country, not particularly well chosen, and without much artistic facility, but honestly and faithfully rendered, together with the daily life of the people. We find the simplest motives, from the flat country, now happily freed from the enemy, from the strand, and from the ocean, where their own ships now held sway. These pictures, both large and small, still seemed like the stammering of a child, for everything was new, everything had to be learned again from the beginning. But the artists' delight in their discovery within their own country and amongst near neighbours, and their intrepidity and *naïveté* in rendering what is new, give their works a certain freshness and incite us to share their joy; and this takes the place of high artistic enjoyment. The indefatigable, honest study of nature gradually brought them to observe the more complex features in the landscape. They gained an appreciation of the charm lying in the shifting and



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intersection of the lines, an understanding of the importance of the horizon and of the outlook into the distance and from an elevation, of the arching of the sky and the rich cloud forms, of the light at different times of the day ; and with the knowledge of line and air perspective came the consciousness of the peculiar beauty of the Dutch landscape, the shading off of its local colours by the vapour from the sea close by, with which the whole air is saturated. With the twenties Dutch landscape painting in this direction develops to its first very remarkable period of excellence. A number of artists at The Hague, in Haarlem, Rotterdam, and Amsterdam, first and foremost Jan van Goyen, understand how to represent the manifold charms of the country, with its peculiar and poetic atmosphere, the canals and the sea, in a great number of pictures, mostly small ones, whose pictorial rendering is various, often very telling and of great artistic merit.

The development of this tone-painting was further advanced by the observation of sunlight, which breaks into gold through the influence of the Dutch atmosphere. The willows of Holland, bathed in the sunshine, or the sluggish water glittering and reflecting the light, occasionally too the flat country in the mild rays of the moon, were depicted at that time by certain artists, especially by Albert Cuyp and Jan van der Cappelle, with a brilliancy and clearness which surpass the light-effects of the classic landscapes of a Claude Lorrain.

When these men, in the most varied and often in the most perfect ways, thus represented their native landscape, the land and sea, in its most characteristic form, as affected

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by the light and atmosphere, they had by no means exhausted the varying aspects of the world of nature surrounding them ; other peculiarities of the Dutch landscape were neglected or still remained unnoticed. Accurate construction, regulated by uniform horizontal lines and shorter vertical ones, wealth of detail and local colouring, were not brought out sufficiently in the striving after impressionist rendering of the tone-effect. And so, just when tone-painting in landscape was celebrating its greatest triumphs, the voice of opposition began to be heard. The Amsterdam Hercules Segers in his Alpine valleys had, together with the understanding for light effects and distance, again awakened a feeling for grand forms and harmonious construction of the landscape ; and the younger Haarlem painters, Cornelis Vroom at their head, discovered the beauty of the wood, with its old trees, its fresh green, and its mysterious gloom. At the same time they introduced a new element into landscape painting, the poetic mood, the transmission of our human feelings into nature, the effect on our frame of mind of certain lights and tints in the landscape. By the side of and before those Haarlem masters, Segers, and notably Rembrandt, had, with much greater energy, made this poetic mood the real and principal motive of landscape composition. Upon this basis a younger Haarlem painter, Jacob van Ruisdael, brings Dutch landscape painting to its highest and last period of excellence. In his pictures the poetic mood is also an important motive ; it is that, indeed, which gives them their peculiar charm ; but it does not make the artist forget to render nature in all its details, and thus to ensure obtaining his effect objectively. He becomes

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conscious also of the wealth of motives in his native country. The manifold beauties of the Dutch and Lower German country; the far distances with the high sky, the dark woods, the beach with figures and a view over the sea, the lonely ocean itself; town-scenes, too, are depicted by Ruisdael and by the numerous masters, who become more or less his independent disciples in observing the various atmospheric effects, the light at different times of the day and at different seasons, sometimes in quiet solitude, sometimes in the midst of life and bustle.

By the side of this national art, which grew and developed brilliantly through more than a quarter of a century, there was another school of Dutch landscape painting, which sought its motives in Italy and was considerably influenced by artists in Rome, at first by the Dutch painter Elsheimer, and later by Claude. Starting from Catholic Utrecht, and particularly cultivated there on account of the relations with Rome, it enjoyed the protection of the learned, as neo-classic, academic art generally did. With the growing diffusion of classic learning, with the increase of luxury and formalism, with the introduction of the Romanic influence and of the spirit of pedantry and affectation which infected the whole of life in Holland, this tendency in landscape painting gets the upper hand more and more. The pure joy of the artist in describing his native country disappears; the feeling for grandeur, for truth, and the poetic mood in the landscape is lost, and its place taken by delight in trifles, in finish, and in the unreal. The dainty little pictures of idyllic landscapes with motives from the neighbourhood of Rome, and with lascivious mythological accessories, again become the



general fashion. The artists return to the imitation of an Elsheimer, even of a Brueghel, from whom they had started almost a century before, or they take pleasure in insipid and petty aping of the scene-painting of Italian imitators of Salvator Rosa and Gaspard Poussin. While those beginners of national art, in spite of their clumsiness, excited our pleasure by their straightforward *naïveté* and earnest endeavour, these decadents have an importance which is scarcely more than historical. It has taken more than a century and a half for Dutch landscape painting to struggle out of this stage of imitation, and to win its way back again to free creation and fresh feeling for nature.



## HERCULES SEGERS

IN the very front rank of the pioneers of modern landscape painting we find an artist who till a short time ago only used to be mentioned as a pregnant example of the proverb, "Art goes a-begging." The poor fellow is said finally to have starved over his painting! None of the pictures of this artist, Hercules Segers, were known, and his extremely rare etchings were almost forgotten. Attention has again been drawn to these very peculiar, coloured, printed stippled leaves since the master's *œuvre* was taken out of a book into which it was pasted in the Academy at Amsterdam, and brought to the Rijksmuseum; and since then single leaves have fetched at sales the same prices as Rembrandt's engravings.

We are indeed not without some pictures painted by him, but they have been hidden under other names.

To modern Dutch documental research we owe the scanty outlines for this artist's life. Hercules Segers, who is also called Hercules Pietersz, after his father Pieter Segers, was born in 1590, probably at Haarlem. But as a boy we find him in Amsterdam, where he was early apprenticed to Gilles van Coninxloo. He seems to have been with him when he died, as his father was still in Coninxloo's debt for the apprentice fee. We first meet Hercules as an independent artist in 1612, when he was

member of the Guild in Haarlem. Soon after he returned to Amsterdam. Here, on December 27, he married Anneken van der Bruggen from Antwerp; she was forty, and had been a resident of Amsterdam for thirteen years. A natural daughter was brought up in his house. He resides in Amsterdam till 1629, as documents repeatedly testify. In the year 1631 he is mentioned as being in Utrecht; in 1633 we find him at The Hague; soon after he seems to have returned to Amsterdam, as the Amsterdam Samuel van Hoogstratten "in zijne groene Jaeren" still knew him. The latter was born in 1627, so we may fix the date of Segers's death about 1640.

Almost half the documents relating to him consist of confessions of debt. They therefore confirm the statements of the Dutch artist biographers, who tell us that his life was a continual struggle. However, the report of his having suffered extreme want, of his being obliged to use his shirts and his wife's linen to print his plates, appear to be part of those exaggerations with which Houbraken and his imitators loved to adorn their narratives.

The etchings of Segers must be our constant companions on the road to the discovery of his paintings. Only when we have entirely mastered the peculiar characteristics of the former shall we be able gradually to secure a small number of works for our master from among the landscapes which are sometimes ascribed to Rembrandt, sometimes to Ruisdael, van Goyen, and other artists. Segers' etching work is of considerable extent; the Amsterdam Cabinet alone possesses fifty different leaves by him; altogether we know nearly sixty, many of which

—so far as there are several other proofs—are in nearly as many “states” as there are copies. The artist, who grew up in the landscape school of the beginning of the sixteenth century (a school tied and bound by convention), is frequently so modern in feeling that in his preference for coloured prints, which he sometimes printed in one single tone, sometimes in many tones, afterwards laying on colour in some places, he appears as the forerunner of our most modern colour-etchers. These etchings are among the greatest rarities. There is only one fairly complete work, and that is the one above mentioned in the Cabinet of the Rijksmuseum at Amsterdam. We meet with them also in the Print Room of the British Museum, in the Dresden and Berlin Cabinets, in the Albertina in Vienna, and in the collection of King Frederick August II. at Dresden. In each place there are about ten to twenty of these leaves, only a very few being in other collections.

The motives are almost entirely of a landscape character, and indeed they are landscapes without figures, or with quite subordinate accessories. The few exceptions prove the rule: Segers was a landscape painter. “The Woman at the Cross,” the only figurative—and indeed purely figurative—leaf by the master, is an almost faithful copy after the well-known woodcut of Hans Baldung, but executed in an opposite spirit. The transition to a personal conception proves indeed that the artist could render human forms, but he follows so closely the older German masters, whose austere conception was akin to his, and whose technique particularly interested him, that we may conclude that he generally refrained from figurative





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compositions of his own. The treatment of the flesh and drapery too is almost the same as that of his rocks and stony ground : full of furrows, torn and jagged, very little flesh on the bones, and in this very different from Baldung's model. He is particularly solicitous about the colour-effect and the tone-values, by means of which with a few tones he has made a coloured picture out of a black drawing. It is therefore not out of the question that he should occasionally have painted figures. The Madonna picture ("een lieve vrouwtie met een kinnetie in den arm lesende in een boeck"), which is particularly noted in a sale at The Hague in 1662, as a work by Hercules Segers, I do not incline to attribute to the Antwerp Gerard Seghers, as Bredius does ; the less so as in a catalogue of the paintings of the Amsterdam art-dealer Johannes de Renialme in 1655 we find among Segers' landscape pictures a "Mariabeelt van Segers" (valued at 150 florins). In the sales we frequently find a painting with a death's head, a motive which seems to have been a commission from some doctor. Otherwise only two still-life pictures, mentioned in the documents, and the study of a horse, which also shows his understanding of the rendering of the body, present different motives.

In his landscape etchings Segers occasionally shows us flat country, and these landscapes distinctly bear the character of his Dutch home. We know more than a dozen such leaves, all of them rich in detail and of the fidelity of a "view," but very harmonious and picturesque in effect. Others treat simple sylvan motives : a hut by the roadside among trees, the interior of a wood, a road skirting the wood with a town in the distance—akin to C. Vroom,

and even to an early Jacob van Ruisdael and Hobbema—then an early work : a great tree near the sea, the view of a stately Renaissance castle (Hämelscheburg, near Hameln?), the large bird's-eye view of a Dutch country-seat on a broad river, the outlook from a window on to the Norderkerk of Amsterdam, and others. But the majority of his etchings represent mountain landscapes, desolate valleys with steep sides, whose naked rocks only here and there afford space and nourishment for a stunted tree, a bearded pine. The few drawings by Segers which we possess are of a similar nature. The scenery is of pronounced Alpine character. And indeed even to-day we still think we recognise certain spots from the Reuss Valley and the Upper Engadine. Other leaves, in which views into the far, level distance are connected with steep rock formations in the foreground, appear at first sight to be free combinations of the artist's, after studies from his Alpine journey and home motives.

These subjects, however, when looked at more closely, show no fantastic composition or arbitrary combination ; they present an entirely harmonious landscape appearance, and permit us to conclude that they are reminiscences of the Lower Alps. A leaf in the Amsterdam Cabinet, with a straggling ruin into which houses with flat roofs are built, has such a pronounced Italian character that we must suppose the artist has also crossed the Alps and seen Italy.

All Segers' etchings have a finished personal style, however different may be the character of country they represent, and however clearly the maturer works may be distinguished from early ones. Although not one leaf

bears his name (the etching signed with the ambiguous monogram "H. S." does not appear to me to be from his hand), and unfortunately not one leaf is dated, yet even a layman who attentively observes a number of these etchings would easily recognise the same hand in the others, quite apart from the artist's individuality being at once apparent from the technique. He prints his leaves in coloured tones and then partly paints them over with pale colours. Segers was one of the first landscape painters in Holland who tried his skill as an etcher; his technique therefore has still the simple and vigorous, more draughtsmanlike manner, similar to that of his contemporaries, Jan and Esaias van de Velde, or Willem Buytewech. In this, however, as well as in his motives, he is more varied and more original than those artists. Apparently, too, most of the simple black prints which are preserved to us are to be considered as proof impressions, which only form the ground upon which, by means of different coloured tone-printing and by laying on afterwards single colours, he strove to produce leaves having perfect pictorial effect. In the small landscapes, with views into the far distance, he confines himself as a rule to rendering, with simple, almost parallel little strokes, the movement and the character of the country; the leaves with desolate Alpine regions are, on the contrary, treated in a peculiarly rugged manner, corresponding to the weather-beaten rock forms which are represented; the shadows here look as if they were carried out with aquatint. Occasionally he goes so far as to render the most fugitive cloud shadows in quite a modern way. A striking character is given to his works by other peculiarities, by a certain scheme of composition



and a predilection for some particular forms of nature. He thus betrays his descent from the Flemish landscape school of the sixteenth century, and particularly from his teacher Gilles van Coninxloo, by his supplementary details, which he mostly places in the foreground : a jutting wall of rock in a corner with a bare fir-tree standing out like a spectre in the clear air, more infrequently a dark piece of country or something similar. He reminds us in this, as well as in his treatment of the rocks, of an older fellow pupil, R. Savery, who had also chosen the Alps as his principal field of study. Segers is very peculiar in his drawing of the trees. His crippled and dried firs—they are probably intended for larches—resemble slender hay dolls. Only here and there they have short branches with needles, and are hung with moss, looking like beards. In this form they reappear upon nearly all his etchings of mountain landscapes. The relationship of these fantastic formations to the trees in the pictures of the German “Little Masters,” particularly in Altdorfer’s, is certainly not purely accidental : Segers’ coloured prints and his technique show that he trod in the footsteps of those artists, whom he, as we see, also occasionally copied. When Segers introduces foliage trees he mostly characterises them by rough little dabs which remind us of the *pointillé* manner of the modern Impressionists. He only renders the leaves singly in his first period, as in the “Great Tree.” But with these striking peculiarities he is never monotonous, nor can we call him a mannerist ; his deep respect for nature and his earnest study of nature, in which he surpasses all the landscape-painters of his time, make him appear new and true to nature in nearly every leaf ; and yet, thanks

to his rich imagination and to his masterly, artistic arrangement, he makes a finished picture out of every faithful study of nature.

The vigorous, artistic language which speaks from these landscape etchings was bound to be apparent in his paintings. At the outset we can take it for granted that an artist has also painted who, in his prints, strives after a pictorial effect, which otherwise is only attainable in painting. That this is really the case, that Segers, in his comparatively short life, painted a not inconsiderable number of landscapes is proved by inventories of personal estate, and by contemporary catalogues of sales, and by others dating from the later years of the seventeenth century. The Amsterdam art-dealer, Johannes de Renialme, in the year 1640, possessed no fewer than thirty-six of his paintings. At that time he had probably bought the personal estate left by the artist, who had died a short time before, for fifteen years later another list only speaks of eight pictures of Segers'.

We have known a signed painting of the artist's for some time in the Berlin Gallery, the painting of a flat landscape, which was acquired with the Suermondt Gallery. The signature, Hercules Segers, which on cleaning the picture came to light under the false signature J. N. Goyen, reveals the hand that signed the documents relating to the artist. But we have other evidence for the authorship in an etching of the artist's in the Amsterdam Cabinet, which puts before us almost the same view. It is a regular Dutch motive, which again, apparently, is based upon an almost faithful study of nature: a view of the little town of Rhenen, as the situation and the

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peculiar form of the high church tower prove. Behind the raised bank, which slopes down fairly steeply to the river, we see the Gothic tower and the roofs of the higher houses of the little town which lies along the bank ; on the other side of the river the level plain with rich pastures and fields, intersected by low hedges and relieved by some church towers and little houses, stretches far away into the distance. This motive is repeated in some of his etchings, and the colouring too is closely akin to that of his coloured prints—vigorous, but toned, brownish-green in the foreground, while in the centre-ground a luscious green predominates, which becomes rather bluish in the distance.

The Berlin Gallery possesses a second small painting, which, from its great affinity to this signed picture and the etchings with similar motives, we can attribute with certainty to our artist. From the gently undulating sand-hills in the foreground we look on to a hamlet lying on a little river or a pond, at the side is a high church tower and a windmill—some suppose it to be Amersfoort, others again Rhenen—at the back the flat country stretches out into the distance, is intersected by fences and hedges, and covered with scattered hamlets and groups of trees. A cloudless evening sky arches above the low landscape, the sun has just set, and its rays have left a glow on the horizon. Higher up there is already the cold colouring of night, and lying over all is that strange, melancholy, poetic mood, which is also peculiar to most of the artist's etchings. The colouring is cool ; a pale greyish-green, with yellowish lights and brownish shadows, predominates, and in the sky changes into a cold green-blue. The colours are thin



and lightly laid on, the objects are drawn in exactly the broad, rugged manner of most of his etchings.

A few Alpine landscapes, which have only been discovered quite lately, follow these simple motives of the Dutch low country. Their affinity to the etchings with similar motives would suffice to determine their attribution, but over and above this, one is also fully signed and precisely in the same way as the larger Berlin picture. It is a high-lying valley, in the possession of Dr. C. Hofstede de Groot at the Hague; he bought it at Innsbruck as a Jodocus Momper, but immediately recognised it as a work of Segers. After the picture had been taken out of the frame, the original signature appeared: Hercules Segers. A rocky Alpine valley is represented with scanty vegetation, scattered huts, and a church ruin in the centre, quite in the manner of the numerous etchings with Alpine motives. Even the extraordinary form of the firs, standing here and there upon the rocks, and the peculiar rugged treatment of the ground again occurs. In the brownish ground-colour, which frequently shines through, in the rich colouring, and in the broad sweeping manner of painting, it nearly approaches Jodocus Momper, to whom it was ascribed. The details also remind us of the earlier landscapes of another Fleming—Adriaen Brouwer; even the painting of the comparatively large and skilfully drawn figure in the foreground puts us in mind of this artist. Another small mountain landscape in the collection of Count Cavens at Brussels has quite the same character. Here, too, a mountain valley is represented, resembling the one in the work characterised above; to the right, high, rocky mountains tower above the river, while the view into



the distance shows a level plain. The treatment of the ground, the drawing of the trees, particularly the peculiar form of the firs, and other characteristics of the painting convincingly speak the language of our artist. A rather smaller mountain landscape, which is in the possession of Count Fürstenberg of Herdringen Castle, seems to be the companion piece.

By means of these pictures as well as by comparison with the etchings, we can prove a well-known large painting to be the work of Hercules Segers; the mountain landscape, which, till a short time ago, was exhibited in the Uffizi under Rembrandt's name. It is the artist's masterpiece, one of the most impressive landscape pictures of all times. It does, indeed, no dishonour to the name which it bore; the design is so grand that it nearly approaches Rubens's landscape with Ulysses and Nausicaa in the Palazzo Pitti, and at the same time the mood is so powerfully impressive that we are reminded of Rembrandt's "Mill" at Bowood. Not only the spirit pervading it, but the light, and the deep, warm, brownish tone put us in mind of Rembrandt. The shape of the mountains and the drawing of the ground resemble the formation of the Alpine world already known to us. From a number of his etchings we know the far distance, with the fields and hedges, the small trees, scattered houses and hamlets, and the river which intersects them. The knobby form of the foliage trees, the fantastic firs and dry tree-stumps we have characterised above. The peculiar rugged way of laying on the colours in the light, and the thin treatment and brown colouring of the shadows, the general brownish tone, the deep green of the

vegetation, the clear, almost cloudless sky, which is much darker up above, the accessories of the few quite small, figures and animals, we found in the two Dutch far-distance views of the Berlin Museum. In the alternation of horizontal and vertical lines; in the combination of solid, rough, roundish mountain forms with the delicate straight lines of the broad plain; in the contrast of desolate rock-formations with richly cultivated arable land; in the movement of the clouds, and of the shadows which they throw over the landscape, the picture is as well thought out and as skilfully composed as few other landscapes of the Dutch school; and perhaps the master's greatest art is shown in his skill in disguising all these expedients, and grandly brings out the local character. Comparison with this Florentine painting permits us to set down, as a probable work of Segers, another mountain picture, the "Desolate High Valley," in the National Gallery of Edinburgh. It also goes under Rembrandt's name, and, some years ago, in a publication, I gave it as such, although I admitted the doubt and mentioned Segers. A steep mountain rises on one side of a broad mountain stream, which has washed rubble on to the flat bank. Some scanty shrub grows under the shelter of the wall of rock, otherwise the valley is quite desolate. The melancholy mood in the picture is increased by the gloomy, foggy air, and the broad shadows which the clouds cast over the valley. The composition and mood are quite similar to that in the Florentine landscape; but the colouring is more uniform, a cool brown; the treatment very similar, but the colours are laid on more thinly and sweepingly. The picture

does indeed approach Rembrandt very nearly, especially his accredited landscapes dating from towards the end of the thirties, but still the composition is more characteristic of Segers, and here, too, it is particularly the strongly pronounced local character, the faithful rendering of the high mountains which Rembrandt never saw—which speaks for the older artist. No other landscape-painter is so nearly akin as he to Rembrandt; and the esteem the great master had for him is proved by the unusually large number of Segers' pictures in his possession, and by the circumstance that Rembrandt touched up one of Segers' plates after his death. Rembrandt was not the one of the two men who imparted knowledge; on the contrary, it was Segers, who, after again settling in Amsterdam, about the middle of the thirties, exercised a strong influence upon the young Leyden painter, and, indeed, seems to have induced him to take up landscape-painting. The doll-like little figure of the rider by the river in the centre-ground is characteristic of Segers, as well as the richer accessories on the road in front, which have been painted over by his own hand, but have partly come through; a waggon with two horses, just as we see it in the foreground of the Florentine picture; and the shepherd with a flock of sheep which we find in the signed landscape in the Berlin Gallery.

Another little picture which I saw in Paris, in the collection of the painter Gigoux: Dutch flat country by evening light, ascribed to Jacob van Ruisdael, is so nearly related to the two Berlin pictures in composition, light, and poetic effect, as well as in the rugged treatment of the lights, in the enamel-like effect, and in the brownish-



greenish colouring of the vegetation, that only Segers can be the artist. I do not know where this poetical little picture is now, I am told it is not exhibited in the gallery at Besançon to which Gigoux bequeathed his collection.

We make the acquaintance of Segers in a new way in a larger landscape which came to James Simon's gallery in Berlin some years ago. Here too we look from higher ground away into the distance over a broad plain intersected by a river, here and there high, bare rocks of conical shape stand out, contrasting effectively with the fruitful plain with its fields, orchards and pleasant hamlets. These rock-formations, particularly the large supplementary piece in the right corner of the foreground, are so characteristic of Segers, especially in the etchings, that they alone must lead us to consider him the painter of this picture ; his peculiar formation of firs, gaunt of shape and thickly hung with moss, we find again here. The affinities with the group of pictures described above, and particularly with the etchings, come out still more in the high point of view of the picture, in the skilful way in which the numerous horizontal lines are contrasted with single, energetic, vertical ones, and in the ground-formation as well as in the clouds and cloud-shadows, are interrupted by other lines which give depth and distance to the picture. The presentment of the flat distance with the river and the low hedges, the colouring and laying on of the colours are also almost the same as in the later pictures. Also characteristic of Segers is the great fidelity with which the local character of the landscape is expressed here, in the same way as in almost all his etchings and



landscapes. The cone-shaped rock in the foreground is of the same type as two similar elevations farther down in the valley; they seem quite true to nature, and indeed, in the Netherlands, we find such elevations rising abruptly out of the plain. The upper Maes Valley has this character. The broad, sluggish river, the fruitful country with the small hamlets, the cloister ruins, the red-gabled houses, standing in little orchards, and close by, the steep, blunt cone-shaped rocks are to be seen to-day between Limburg and Maastricht, in spite of all the changes which the flourishing trade of nearly a century has called forth there. A view of Brussels by Segers is quoted in the old inventories, and that the artist knew this neighbourhood is shown by some of his etchings with landscapes of quite similar appearance. One of these, with small ancient-looking hamlets between scattered, steep, cone-shaped rocks, affords us further justification in tracing back our picture to Hercules Segers.

When we compare this picture with the later paintings, we find a great difference in the colouring. In these last we find a deep brownish or bluish-green tone, a stronger chiaroscuro, and effective lighting common to all; here we find more vigorous local colours with ordinary, sunny daylight. A fresher, greener tone in the vegetation, brownish in the foreground, becoming bluish in the distance, is indeed characteristic here too, but the colours are richer and purer, and with them single, stronger local colours are prominent, such as dull brown and a deep red, particularly in the brick houses with high tiled roofs in the foreground. In this, as well as in the treatment of the rocks and trees, reminiscences are still apparent of those

Flemish landscape-painters who had moved to Amsterdam, for their faith, towards the end of the sixteenth century. In the rocks pushed forward into the foreground, like a piece of stage scenery, as well as in the treatment of the same, we are reminded most of Roelant Savery; in the rather petty treatment of the foliage, and the flickering lights on the woodland scenery to the left there is a quite conspicuous resemblance to Schoubroek; a circumstance that in no way argues against Segers being the author of the picture, for we know that the artist was a pupil of Gilles van Coninxloo, the head of that Flemish landscape colony in Amsterdam. In this youthful work of the master, which gains in interest by its connection with the older landscape school, we also perceive how far in advance of his countrymen Hercules Segers then was. Peculiarities, like the great supplementary piece in the foreground, and the scene-shifting in the centre ground, the treatment of the foliage, and, partly too, the more vigorous local colouring, the artist derives from his master, but they are united with such delicate feeling for the character of the place, for the appearance in light and air, that they scarcely strike us, and Segers appears here to us almost as a modern landscape-painter, with his master and his fellow pupils nearly a century behind him, even if we set aside the enormous artistic distance there is between him and them.

But this distance must not lead us to underrate what Segers owes to his master. The works of the Flemish landscape school, whose conception is entirely opposite to the modern idea of representing a landscape as realistically as possible, had also their peculiar excellences and beauties.

If these only appear fully and grandly in Rubens, yet they are still present with artists like Pieter Brueghel and his son Jan Brueghel, G. van Coninxloo, L. van Valckenburg, Jod. Momper, P. Schoubroek, and others. In their landscapes these artists strive to describe the abundant and glorious creations of nature and their magnificent colouring; they unite wealth of composition with delight in detail. Hercules Segers has profited by this, although his conception of the landscape—as he worked it out in the course of time—is in the sharpest contrast to that of his teachers and predecessors. His predilection for rich landscape composition, for great, varied forms, for high mountains, for the loneliness of nature, for a mass of detail, even if it was not the result of his training in Coninxloo's studio, was yet developed and furthered by it. This training preserved Segers from monotony and the bald rendering of nature, from the meagre composition peculiar to the pictures of contemporary Dutch landscape-painters, of Arent Arentz, H. Avercamp, Jan Porcellis, E. van de Velde, and even to a Jan van Goyen and Pieter Molyn in their earlier period. Yet he may, with them, lay full claim to the fame of having discovered the modern landscape, indeed it is more his due than the others.

In spite of the fact that he united in himself the two schools, that of the older Flemish landscape art and of the younger Dutch, yet he was in no sense an eclectic; probably no landscape painter of any time or school was as individual as he was. The variety in his landscape motives is striking. We have landscapes of mountains and plains; and these views of the Alpine world, as well as those of his Dutch home, are again very different from one another;



we have town-views and sea-views, a quiet sea and a storm at sea, simple peasant huts overshadowed by trees, and ruined castles and churches by the side of compositions showing such wealth of form that we continually discover new details in them; bare, desolate rocky mountains of fantastic, weather-worn stone, that remind us of moonlight landscapes, and then pictures of richly diversified, low-lying country, and mysterious woods whose poetic mood is almost modern. These different and various motives are, indeed, no free creations of the artist's fancy; on the contrary—and in this too he is a pioneer of modern landscape art—he follows nature so closely that his pictures, as a rule, almost present themselves as faithful “views,”\* even though, as a good Dutchman, it sometimes happens that he places a windmill deep down in a narrow gorge. The skill with which he creates a picture out of the “view,” the way in which he at once sees nature in pictorial form and writes it down, thereby expressing the character of the country faithfully and surely, all this proves the genial landscape painter.

And yet a glance at his etchings convinces us that this striving after great and rich forms, after copiousness, variety, and contrast in invention and drawing, however important and vigorous it is with Segers, forms, after all, only a comparatively subordinate part of his artistic resources. We have seen that most of the sheets preserved to us are no simple, black prints, as with nearly all other etchers, but the drawing with the point only serves the artist as a ground upon which, in nearly every impression, by means of different colour-tones, as well as by putting

\* The Italian *veduta*, or prospect.



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in lights afterwards with oil-colour, he creates a new, picturesque, and poetic picture. In order, therefore, thoroughly to understand the artist it is necessary to compare the different impressions of one and the same etching.

With all his wealth of detail and his great and finished rendering of the landscape, it is characteristic of his pictures that the sky, although it occupies about a third or a half of the surface, is cloudless, and is rendered by a uniform colour-tone, without any drawing. Only by this finely calculated contrast does the artist attain the necessary calm in his landscape etchings. The light-giving sky gets, at the same time, its extraordinary luminosity and airiness, and by the contrast of the clear atmosphere with the solid, more or less dark mass of the landscape the latter derives its peculiar poetic aspect. The relative proportion in the spacing of the sky and the landscape is remarkable; and it is the direct result of the point of view which the artist chooses for his pictures; it is mostly the bird's-eye view. But he does not always take the highest point in his pictures for a standpoint, as the younger Dutch landscapists do: a Jan van Goyen, Ph. de Koninck, Jan Vermeer von Haarlem, Jacob van Ruisdael, who thereby give their pictures their particular charm; he chooses a medium height. In this way he arrives at the attractive effect of the far-distant view without getting the landscape so strongly foreshortened that the sky—as with the above-mentioned artists—takes up by far the greatest part of the picture, and most details, through this foreshortening, scarcely come out at all. His conception in this is akin to that of the artists of the fifteenth century, to Jan van Eyck and his successors, to the “Maître de Flémalle” and

Dirk Bouts. We cannot, therefore, really call him the "discoverer of the bird's-eye view," although we owe its consistent working out and utilisation for the development of landscape beauty in the most various directions primarily to him. He achieves the peculiar effect of his pictures no longer by taking his standpoint in the foreground of the picture, but outside and above it. He does not, indeed, carry this out as consistently as his Dutch successors; particularly in his earlier period we find those scenic foreground accessories: a jutting piece of rock, the bare trunk of a tree which fantastically projects into the picture, and so on. At least the artist's standpoint is hinted at by this, and a piquant subjective note given to the picture, similar to that of the Japanese artists; though we need not necessarily imagine any relation with them, since the increasing importation of Japanese and Chinese wares into Holland only began when Segers was already a finished artist.

Segers made use of the high point of view principally in order to bring out the effect of the atmosphere upon the landscape. He is, indeed, not yet a *plein air* painter in the modern sense, but he already observes, and with great delicacy, the light effects, the poetic impressiveness of the different lightings, the different times of the day, and even the influence of the atmosphere. His paintings bear witness to this, and particularly also the tone prints and the painted etchings. The "Fleet upon a Calm Sea," in which the ships, without any hint of horizon or waves, appear to float in the sun-vapour, reminds us of Whistler; the "Projecting Rock over an Alpine Chapel at Night-fall," a splendid, entirely painted leaf, in the Dresden

Print-Room, is like a foreshadowing of Rembrandt's "Mill" at Bowood in its poetic impressiveness; the "Rocky Valley with Flat Distance," over which broad cloud-shadows are flitting without a cloud being visible in the clear sky, is not surpassed by the most modern impressionists in its true and telling light effect. Although Segers does not altogether give up local colour, and, indeed, in his earlier works gives it great prominence, he is in the first place a tone painter, and through his delicate rendering of atmospheric effects—as again the coloured etchings in their most varied impressions best show—he has attained the most wonderful and most varied results.

All these many-sided, artistic means combine to produce the poetic mood in Segers's pictures. In this, by the side of Elsheimer, he is the great discoverer, the founder of the modern landscape; but Segers is the more comprehensive and many-sided artist of the two. Like Elsheimer, Segers shows in the mood of his pictures the reflection of his melancholy disposition, of the inclination to solitude which made him take refuge with Nature and find calm and enjoyment there. He discovered beauties in her which no one had discovered before, and which no one has been able to express as he has in his pictures. He knows how to suggest his own mood to the spectator: the feeling of grandeur and power by the mighty forms of his mountain world; the feeling of decay by desolate masses of rock, ruins, and dead trees; the feeling of infinity by the outlook into the far distance, and the high sky arching above; the mood of longing by the closing night, and the deep shadows which it casts over the landscape, while on the sky there is still light from the glow of the sunset. This



subjective mood is free from every modern sickliness and sentimentality; it appears as the objective expression of that which is seen. With it corresponds the varied, always individual and healthy calligraphy of the artist in his etchings as well as in his paintings. Sometimes it is rugged and angular, sometimes light and delicate; sometimes it is like a drawing, sometimes toned; sometimes he uses strokes, sometimes dots; but always it is in unison with the forms, the lighting, and the mood.

In artistic feeling Segers was so far beyond his time, followed artistic aims so exclusively, and in so doing made so few concessions to the taste of the great mass of the public, that he was scarcely understood, and little esteemed. It is on the question of his lack of success, his misery, and his poverty that the old writers have at least left us some few words. We do not hear if he had pupils, but undoubtedly different Amsterdam artists, as Roelant Roghman, François de Momper, and particularly Allart van Everdingen, have learnt from him. And yet only one, Rembrandt van Rijn, really understood him, or was fully conscious of his worth. It was Segers who stimulated him to direct his full attention to landscape; it was owing to Segers that he gave up the scenic "sidewings" in his landscapes, which, following the example of his teacher, he pushed into the foreground and background of his composition. Rembrandt, like Segers, went directly to Nature, and gained feeling and understanding for her forms and moods; and his first landscape pictures and landscape etchings date from his acquaintance with Segers, whose influence is revealed in their rich and fantastic construction, in the tone treatment, and especially in the



poetic mood, which, with all their individuality and grandeur, remains unchanged. It is certainly not the smallest leaf in the chaplet of the older master, who was misjudged by his contemporaries and forgotten by posterity, to have guided the great landscape poet on to this path.

JAN VAN GOYEN AND SALOMON VAN  
RUYSDAEL

SEGGERS's highly individual feeling for landscape was too far in advance of his time for him to exercise a lasting impression on his contemporaries, or even to found a school. Together with him, and almost at the same time, there had grown up in the larger and smaller towns of Holland a whole generation of young landscapists, who in the simple rendering of native landscape met the taste of their countrymen without making any special claims on their understanding of art. Their love of home, their pride in their country, which was now freed from the enemy, awoke the desire in artists to reproduce this country in all simplicity, just as they saw it themselves, to choose little sections from Nature as she presented herself at the different seasons, with changing accessories of country people, fishermen, and market folk. They were never weary of presenting such scenes in pictures which were as unassuming in shape as in conception and painting, and cost little, so that even the humble citizen, whose pride and joy they were, could buy them. The artists, who were themselves of the lower middle class, really and truly painters for the people, without special art education and without position, looked to the humble citizen for support; for the aristocratic and educated classes still

clung to foreign art, as well as to the Academicians and Italian travellers among the Dutch painters. Among the group of men who, after the manner of the old Netherland miniaturists and illustrators, faithfully and conscientiously executed little pictures, one figure is soon prominent, who, in the course of time, from the number and importance of his works, becomes the guiding master of this tendency, and first developed it to full artistic delicacy and individuality. This is Jan van Goyen.

Of the man Goyen we get a livelier picture than of others of the group; he appears a peculiar, but yet almost typical figure of his time. Houbraken's detailed account, and a number of documents which have been lately found, give a clear view of his life and character. Jan van Goyen, born at Leyden on January 13, 1596, was a man of inventive genius and vivid imagination, active and industrious, but restless and changeable. As a young pupil he was constantly changing his teachers, five of whom we know by name. Then, when he was nineteen, he set out on a journey, and in the following year apprenticed himself again to a master in Haarlem, to Esaias van de Velde. Soon after he is in Leyden again, where he marries at the age of twenty-two. In the year 1631 he leaves his native town, and from 1634 lives permanently at The Hague. Here he gets large orders from the town as well as from the Court, and displays extraordinary activity; hundreds of paintings and finished drawings, mostly intended for leaves of albums, are still preserved to us dating from this time. But the restless man was not satisfied with this artistic activity: he began to deal in pictures and arrange picture sales; his passion for gambling drove him to specu-

late in bulbs, for which he paid as much as sixty florins apiece; and eventually he speculated in land and houses. Documents reveal that he owned different houses at the same time; let them (young Paul Potter lived in one of them), sold them, and bought others. From notes and plans in a few little sketch-books which a happy chance has preserved to us we see that he occupied himself with the building and planning of these houses. Unhappily, the restless artist, in spite of his industry and his diligence, made nothing by all these concerns, perhaps because he speculated too much and too recklessly. Money ran through his fingers; he could not keep it. After his death it was not easy for his creditors to get their due. However, his position did not suffer as a result of this strong inclination for trading and gambling: he occupied a respected position in the Painters' Guild of The Hague, and the orders from the town, as well as those from Prince Frederick Henry, are given just in those later years when he was constantly in money difficulties through his building speculations. His daughters inherited his impulsive, easy-going nature: the younger allowed the still-life painter Jacques de Claeuw to take her heart by storm, and had to marry in a hurry; the elder, Margaret, became the wife of Jan Steen, who has immortalised her pleasant features, her jovial disposition, and her hearty ways in numerous pictures.

This restless, open, alert nature, which speaks out of his portrait from Terborch's hand in the Liechtenstein Gallery, is also reflected in his pictures. Among all the industrious landscape painters of Holland, Jan van Goyen may be considered the most prolific. It is indeed difficult



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to reckon to what extent numerically his work exceeds that of his fellow artists, as the pictures of no other artist have during the last few decades changed their owners so quickly, and no artist has so many of his paintings in private possession as he has. But when we consider how many of his works must have been lost, in consequence of the neglect with which they were treated for centuries, and view the many hundreds of finished drawings, we shall certainly not dispute the master's claim to be considered one of the most industrious, productive, and yet facile artists of Holland. This lightness of hand, this rich and creative imagination, was as little native to him as to any other. His early works, as well as his sketch-books, show how industriously he studied Nature, how carefully for years he executed his pictures; only thereby did he attain the facility and freedom with which, in his later period, he gave artistic form to the manifold motives of his country, writing them down almost off-hand.

We possess paintings by the artist from the year 1620, and as his works regularly bear the date together with the signature we can follow his development from year to year in his paintings as well as in his drawings. The paintings till towards the end of the twenties may be designated as youthful works. Like the pictures of his predecessors and contemporaries, they do not show us pure landscape motives, but the landscape is treated more as a stage upon which scenes of everyday life are acted: the village green, with the bustle and stir of the market, the strand, with fishermen and skippers, the high-road, with country people and travellers, a frozen canal enlivened with sledges and skaters, and similar motives, which, as a



JAN VAN GOYEN  
THE SEA AT HAARLEM  
STAEDEL MUSEUM, FRANKFURT



sequel to the representations of the seasons or the months, at times closely follow the typical pictures of the months in the mediæval miniature-books. In colouring, too, they are still related to the older art in that the colours are vigorous and more thickly laid on, even though the tone comes out more strongly than in the contemporary Flemish landscape painters.

Towards the end of the twenties we meet with more and more pure landscapes. They are, indeed, at first more like studies of sections of Dutch country: a farmyard between low bushes, a dune with a scanty growth of grass upon it, a small and limited section of country, with little sky and still less distance. Then the artist, after having settled down at The Hague, begins to take delight in representing the water: the beach at Scheveningen, a view over a stormy sea from the dunes or from a ship, and especially the broad courses of the rivers and canals which are such characteristic features of the landscape in Holland. These works, too, are very simple at first, without any particular charm of perspective, of light and air effect. The artist contents himself with a view of a short stretch of a river with scattered bushes, a pond, a windmill, or a ruin, the beach with the dunes behind, and so on; and these he renders picturesquely and with honest conscientiousness, as simply as he sees them, yet with a firm hand. In the coloured representation of this motive the tone gains more and more the ascendancy over the local colours: for a time a pale yellowish, then a greyish-green tone. By studying industriously out of doors, where his little sketch-book was his constant companion, the less conspicuous beauties of Dutch nature gradually dawn upon him: the flat land-



scape opening out widely to the eye from the low hills, the delicate lines of the country stretching out almost imperceptibly into the far distance, piquantly intersected by the course of the rivers and canals, by the high-roads, by the lines of sand-hills; the arm of the river gradually lost in the horizon, the flat banks accompanying it, upon which are villages among trees, and little headlands with hamlets and bastions cut into the expanse of water, which is enlivened with boats and ferries. And in studying the sky which arches high over the low landscape he perceives how pictorially charming are the cloud-forms, how they determine the lighting of the landscape, how the clouds, with light and shadow, are reflected in the water, and thus give life and variety to the picture. Only now, at the beginning of the forties, do we see that Van Goyen observes the laws of line- and air-perspective with fullest understanding. In the apparently simple Dutch landscape he discovers the most varying motives; and often by small changes and shiftings in drawing and lighting he works up his hasty studies into the most spirited landscapes. In the rendering of the colouring, in which, under the influence of the damp sea air, the tones are closely merged, he achieves a completely pictorial tone-treatment, nearly related to that of Frans Hals in his later pictures. Here, too, the local colour, even the green of the trees and the blue of the ether, is only quite faintly indicated; yet by the laying on, sometimes thickly, sometimes thinly and transparently, of the brown colour in which the whole landscape is sketched, and by the faint suspicion of local colour which is mixed with this, or occasionally placed over it, these pictures very rarely produce a mere mono-

chrome effect or give a monotonous and heavy impression. They have an atmosphere of life; and by means of the clear light which is usually brilliantly reflected in the water, and by the light treatment of the colours, they gain all the more in luminous effect, particularly those of the last years, in which the strong shadows have a darkish grey-brown tone.

In these later pictures Goyen is as simple and economical in the means he employs in composition as he is in his colouring. A broad river with open water or frozen surface generally stretches far away into the picture; its banks are enlivened by the buildings of some place, by a castle or a church. Occasionally we view the sea with the Dutch coast in the distance; above it arches the high sky, covered with restlessly moving clouds, its light clearly reflected in the water. A vigorous shadow extends over the foreground, behind which the principal mass of light is collected towards the centre of the picture; before this a large boat, a carriage with travellers, the trunk of an old tree, stands out effectively, while the distance is lost in delicate vapour, through which details tellingly foreshortened are to be seen. Within this scheme, which, however, is in no way intended by the artist, and which does not at all thrust itself upon the observer, just these paintings of van Goyen's, from the forties and fifties till his death in 1656, prominently display an extraordinary variety in invention, a delicacy and wealth in the observation of nature, united with skilful construction. In looking at most of these numerous pictures, therefore, we do not perceive that the dominance of tone suppresses the local colour of the landscape, giving an effect almost

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of unreality ; that nature, taken at haphazard, governs the composition more than a carefully arranging artistic spirit ; that the light effect, which is mostly very delicate, and occasionally even grand, does not yet rise to true poetic impressiveness. But it is just in this apparent dependence upon nature, and in the facility with which the artist appears to copy nature—which reveals an individual and great style—that there lies the particular charm and, at the same time, the real significance of the high artistic worth of his paintings. His contemporary Frans Hals describes the Dutch people in portrait and genre in a manner that has many points of contact with Jan van Goyen's, and, in the same way, the latter describes the Dutch landscape, characteristically and decidedly, with a truth and mastery which no other master before or after him has attained.

Solomon van Ruysdael is often so like Goyen that his pictures have not infrequently been confused with those of his countryman who was a little his senior. Both artists, without one seeming to be dependent upon the other, represent the same school of Dutch landscape painting. Though Salomon is spoken of as a pupil of van Goyen's there is nothing to support this statement ; it rests upon the internal affinity of his pictures with those of the older artist. A nearer connection between the two artists is improbable, as van Goyen only stayed at Haarlem as a pupil of Esaias van de Velde, when Salomon van Ruysdael was about twelve years old. Goyen afterwards moved to Leyden again, while till now we only have proof of Ruysdael's residence in his native town of



Haarlem. The youthful pictures of the younger master, which we cannot trace beyond the year 1630, also show less affinity to van Goyen's paintings of the same period than to his later pictures.

The lives, and, as it seems, also the characters, of the two artists were essentially different. Van Goyen is restless and erratic, Solomon van Ruysdael quiet and stationary; the former was enterprising and ready for the most varied occupations, the latter only an artist, a simple landscape painter, but a man of substance holding a good position, while the other, in spite of all his industry and talent, is constantly in money difficulties through heavy speculations. This essential difference between the two artists is also expressed in their paintings: van Goyen's art developed richly and fully; we find in his pictures the most varied motives presented; but Solomon's art, during the four decades through which we can follow it, appears almost uniform and much less capable of change. With the exception of a large still-life of dead birds, and of a cavalry action (both were on the market in the nineties), his pictures generally show landscapes with rich accessories. The motives are invariably farm buildings, or an inn under high trees, before which carts stop; the high-road, with cattle or riders; a river with wooded banks, and on the river boats or ferries. In his earlier period the background was closed like a stage; later there is a far view into the hazy distance and over the gently undulating country, which is rich in accessories and picturesquely broken up with scattered buildings and hamlets. With him, as with van Goyen, the tone dominates the local colour from the very beginning: at first this tone is yellowish, then it



takes a grey-greenish, rather dull colouring, till at last, just as with Goyen in his Hague period, it falls into grey, or often becomes almost blackish. The tone, however, is never so colourless as van Goyen likes to see it; those blackish-toned pictures of the sixties generally derive their light and colour from a richly coloured, occasionally almost garish, evening sky, whose reflection in the water increases the luminous effect of the whole. Salomon's winter landscapes, which he painted with particular pleasure in this later period, appear to have almost more colour, and are, at the same time, extremely effective, through the pictorial arrangement and treatment of their rich accessories. The Haarlem origin of the master is betrayed in the more vigorous colouring within the energetic tone effect, as well as in his predilection for sylvan country, for high and stately trees, under which the farm buildings are often almost hidden, while van Goyen at most puts a few poor-looking bushes in the foreground, or occasionally a bare, old tree. People have endeavoured to trace this predilection for wooded landscape to the retrospective influence of Salomon's nephew, Jacob Ruysdael; but there is no proof of any influence worth mentioning of the one upon the other. These landscapes, too, belong, as a rule, to Salomon's middle period, when such an influence would be out of the question. What the two artists have in common is common to the entire art of landscape painting. Salomon Ruysdael occupies a perfectly independent position by the side of his great nephew in Dutch landscape painting. He has taken his native landscape in a particular, and very characteristic, aspect, and often presents it, especially in his later period, with great pictorial skill. On the other



S. VAN RUISDAEL.  
CANAL WITH BOATS  
STAEDEL MUSEUM, FRANKFURT



hand, it was reserved for his great nephew, Jacob Ruisdael, by artistic perfection in construction, by delicacy of feeling for colouring and lighting, by imagination and poetic solemnity, to give the last and crowning touch to Dutch landscape painting.



## JACOB VAN RUISDAEL

THE more we learn about Rembrandt, the deeper we penetrate into his work, the more vividly does the personality of the man stand out before us in his productions. Jacob van Ruisdael, a very different painter, one who, next to him, deserves to be mentioned first among all the artists of Holland, appeals to us in a scarcely less personal way. In numerous portraits Rembrandt shows us himself, his relations and friends; his moods live again in them, and so distinctly that we feel we quite understand them. Ruisdael's paintings tell us of his home, which he has represented with delicate and varied feeling. To the whole wealth of his country—the tender sadness, the melancholy calm, and the monotonous, uniform charm lying over it—he seems to have lent shape and form. Into these pictures of his home Ruisdael has put his soul; they also tell us of his personal mood, though indeed reservedly and softly. He does not impress us like Rembrandt does by his intensity, but by his modest way of hiding himself behind a great representation of nature. But this attracts us to this lonely enthusiast for great landscapes, to this melancholy individual, (whose glowing love and reverence for nature were united with an individual sense for its perception and rendering; we think we know him, imagine we are acquainted with his fate and guess his thoughts.) The



J. VAN RUISDAEL  
COAST SCENE  
NATIONAL GALLERY



world must have bitterly deceived him; misfortune and envy must have persecuted him, for sorrowful feelings never quite to leave him, even in the calm of nature, where he found refuge and peace.

If we question his biographers and documents about him, the scanty intelligence we gain confirms at least one thing: that the artist's contemporaries did not at all accord him the esteem which he deserved. We learn that he was born at Haarlem in 1628 or 1629; that several years before 1659, in which year he obtained his citizenship, he moved to Amsterdam, and lived there till 1681, when, in consequence of a serious illness, he had to return to Haarlem. He is frequently alluded to as being kind-hearted and faithful, and we are told that he entirely supported his father. Incidentally we hear that he went through life as a lonely bachelor, and that, in his best years, he was attacked by the serious illness which obliged him to take refuge in a hospital of his Haarlem "friends," the Mennonites, where he died some few months later (1682), at the age of fifty-three or fifty-four. To the few bald words about the artist Houbraken adds the remark: "Egter heb ik niet kunnen bemerken, dat hy 't geluk tot zyn vrièndin gehad heeft," a conclusion which it is more likely he drew from papers relating to a funeral, which he took to be the artist's,<sup>1</sup> than from information about Ruisdael's life, or from his pictures, for which he had no understanding. If, therefore, we wish to have a picture of the man, his works are the best, and indeed almost the only source. We gladly turn to peruse their depths; with

<sup>1</sup> It was really that of his nephew of the same name, who died shortly before him, in 1681, and had a pauper's funeral, which cost one florin.



scarcely any other artist does our sympathy increase in like manner in so doing.

Ruisdael has not the dazzling, or the fascinating qualities of the other great landscapists of Holland. His paintings have not the lustrous shimmer of the air as those of Aelbert Cuyp, nor the skill and virile strength of a Hobema, nor the genial, sketchy, impressionistic manner of a Jan van Goyen. The bright colouring and the lively details of the works of A. van de Velde are wanting to them, and the artist never attempted, as Rembrandt did, to express the sudden bursting forth of the elementary powers of nature. Neither beautiful, piquant colours, nor a particularly impressive manner in laying them on, is peculiar to him. Most of his works, therefore, do not impress us at the first glance, though they stand out from among all other pictures and attract us again and again. They only appear to be simple, their reserve is stately and thoughtful. That expression of quiet peace and sacred calm which pervades the landscapes, and fills the observer with a peculiar sense of his own dependence and with vague yearnings, arises from the deepest feeling, from a sum of the most delicate observations of nature. The lasting, singular impression made on us by these paintings proceeds from the happiest combination of rare taste, wealth of thought, and fervid feeling possessed by the artist, who has put his whole soul into his pictures.

Ruisdael is exclusively a landscape painter. The case is rare that he himself introduces quite a small, awkwardly-drawn figure into his paintings; otherwise the accessories are put in by a friend, another artist. (But his landscapes are more varied than those of any other painter,) although,

in contrast to other Dutch landscapists, he almost entirely foregoes the representation of different times of the day, of describing the sudden outburst of the powers of nature, of producing any strong effect whatever. In the majority of his pictures we see gently undulating country with clumps of bushes or groups of trees, or the artist takes us into the interior of the wood where primæval, gigantic trees stand by still water, or he shows us the grand spectacle of a torrent breaking out of the thick forest and foaming and dashing over the rocks in the foreground, while high mountains are seen above the tops of the trees. Then again, the master wanders with us upon a hill, or upon the Haarlem dunes, and the wide plain opens out before us to the horizon, above which is the high dome of the sky with its fleeting masses of clouds. Occasionally he allows us to look into a town, to see the Damplatz in Amsterdam, or the Vyver at The Hague, or high up from the scaffolding of the Guildhall tower, we view the town of Amsterdam. Like a true Dutchman, Ruisdael loves the sea. We stroll with him on the beach where we meet pedestrians and fishermen, and look out over the gently moving water and at the coloured sails of the boats, or we put out with him on to the stormy open sea, over which sudden gusts of wind with heavy rain pass. The artist has even painted winter landscapes, which are as superior to all other Dutch landscapists' representations of winter as his sea-pieces, his woodland scenery, his distant views in their way are unsurpassed.

It is remarkable with nearly all these pictures that they appear to have no pronounced local character, also not the effect of a prospect, even when any well-known view of

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a town is given, or when the vast Market Church of Haarlem rises in the background of the picture. With the exception of some works of his earliest period, Ruisdael's landscapes are composed, and their inner construction carefully thought out and pondered over. This, however, is not apparent to the eye of the cursory observer. The simplest little picture from his hand stands out among the landscapes of other artists by reason of the great wealth and variety of the delicate contrasts, generally as well as individually, in the lighting as well as in the rendering of the country, in the foliage and growth of the plants as well as in the cloud formations. Every detail is so skilfully subordinated to the dominant idea and feeling that only on nearer inspection are we conscious of its variety. Notice how the ship is placed and foreshortened on the motionless water, how well the different forms of the simple grass growing on the dunes are observed, how the trunks of the trees are disposed in the woods, how the lines of the country shift, how the clouds are built up. Even in trifles we recognise the carefully arranging hand which has ordered everything harmoniously and firmly, and everywhere we find not cold perception merely, but warm feeling and a great soul.

The means by which Ruisdael brings about the harmonious effect of his rich compositions and, at the same time, invests them with their "poetic" mood, is to be found first and foremost in his art of lighting, his manner of treating chiaroscuro, and of rendering the air. While most of the old landscapists put no feeling into the sky, even though often making effective use of it as the source of light, Ruisdael unites sky and earth, his



clouds really arch, life and harmony are given by the air to the whole landscape. With him the air penetrates the whole. To quote Fromentin's remark: "Ruisdael sees every object in the landscape together with the corresponding point in the atmosphere." (No other master has observed the sky in every kind of light with such fine discrimination as he, and rendered it as grandly and with such consummate skill;) not one has understood how to render the movement of the air, the construction of the clouds as faithfully and accurately, has given the unrest and the movement as harmoniously and firmly. In the same way he gives us a vivid, finished picture of the momentary unrest in the movement of the water. The light clouds hurrying before the wind in the pale blue ether, their different strata piled one above the other—how they are built up, how lighted by the sun and the various reflected lights they receive, how their shadows give life to the landscape—the air penetrating wood and rock, uniting sky and ocean, surrounding every part of the landscape and wrapping it in its delicate haze; all this Jacob Ruisdael has expressed in his pictures with such infinite delicacy, and with such variety that the observer's understanding of nature is thereby broadened and deepened in many ways.

The chiaroscuro as well as the colouring is determined in his picture by the air-tone. In contrast to the impressionist tone-painters of the older Dutch landscape school, Ruisdael again brings out the local colours more strongly, not so much so, however, as to impair the harmonious atmospheric mood. The colours on his palette are restricted to a delicately toned green of the vegetation, changing mostly



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into brownish, occasionally, too, into bluish in the distance; for the country and the clouds he uses brown and grey. Only the tender blue of the ether—which, unhappily in many of his pictures has become too sharp from cleaning, or from the colours having come through—and occasionally a pale brown-red in the houses shine through the grey clouds and brown-green trees as the only more vigorous colours, and, just as in nature, form the most delicate contrasts to the green of the vegetation. The principal tone is always cool, in this, too, resembling nature.

This particular significance given to the air is the cause of the peculiar poetic mood in Ruisdael's pictures. In most of his landscapes a longing, even a melancholy touch predominates. The presentment of the lofty grandeur of nature, its permanence and eternal rejuvenescence awake in the observer the feeling of his own insignificance and transitoriness. This feeling does not deter us from looking at nature, does not abate our ardour, does not overwhelm us with wonder and amazement, but a calm and resigned mood steals over us, our soul thrills with deep devotion. So to know nature that we feel one with her, are irresistibly drawn to her, although this power appears so mighty that it almost crushes us, to feel the soul of nature, was only granted to few artists, as Hercules Segers, and above all to Rembrandt. They describe to us her imposing power and grandeur, Jacob Ruisdael her sublime equanimity with which she compels our submission and quiet admiration. We can therefore easily understand how it was that Goethe honoured him as thinker and poet. From the pictures he drew conclusions as to their creator; he saw in him a

melancholy individual, who flees the abode of men to weep his fill on the bosom of nature, and in communion with the (spirit of nature), to gain peace and wisdom from which to gather strength for his artistic creations. The "perfect symbolism" which Goethe further admires in him, is indeed to be seen in some works from the artist's later period. Thus in the "Jewish Churchyard," in the Dresden Gallery, which gave occasion to Goethe's remarks. Here the decay of all that is earthly, the transitoriness of the work of men's hands, over which eternally renewing nature remorselessly passes, is clearly, almost insistently, pointed out. But generally when the artist is represented as a misanthropist and a lonely dreamer, the feelings ascribed to him are too modern and romantic. Ruisdael's thoughts were certainly more naïve, however badly life may have treated him. He seems to have liked to live in great towns, and there he associated with many artists who painted the accessories of his pictures, or whom he helped by painting the landscape backgrounds of their pictures (as Jan Vonck and Jacomo Victorio), and with whom he was closely connected as teacher or friend—that this was the case with Meindert Hobbema we know. His serious nature was certainly far from the "Weltschmerz" of a Werther; it was serene and joyfully creative, full of enthusiasm and the most delicate feeling for nature, full of joy in life and absorption in work, drawing its strength from within, it was full of peace and religious devotion.

The great variety in construction and feeling in Ruisdael's pictures shows how thoroughly they are thought out, with what feeling for style they are conceived. The wood interiors only give us little of the sky, but it is reflected in

the still water—which, in such pictures, lies between the trees—and thus light is brought into the darkness of the woods. In the distant views the air is the most important part of the picture. In the strand pictures the sea is only slightly agitated, so as to harmonise with the quiet line of the sand-hills; the composition is simply arranged. In the marine pieces, in which there is scarcely anything to be seen of the beach, the water is very rough; the clouds, hurrying across the sky and piling themselves one atop the other, seem to touch the foaming waves. It pleases the artist to put much brushwood and many trees, out of which a hut or a little hamlet peeps, into his ordinary landscapes, whereas, in the winter scenes, the trees are of little account, but houses and more diversified country give life to frozen nature and also enrich the colouring; the snow takes different tones according to the light. If the accessories almost entirely disappear in the artist's landscapes, the town pictures are more than rich in coloured figures in the streets and squares, and the canals are full of boats with bright sails. Everywhere is revealed the subtlest understanding for character and mood, for construction and for movement in the landscape, which yet has the appearance of being immediately transferred from nature to the picture.

Jacob Ruysdael was not a great and finished master all at once; important landscapists prepared the way for his art. In his native town of Haarlem, from the thirties, a counter current—which strove for greater fidelity to nature by laying more stress on local colour and by more individual execution—opposed itself to the tendency of the older Dutch landscape school under the leadership of Jan



van Goyen, which was based entirely on tone, and which produced its effects with monochrome, hazy, indefinite painting. Such artists as Cornelis Vroom, who, already in 1628, the year of Jacob Ruisdael's birth, was honoured in Haarlem as the most prominent landscapist, Balthasar van der Veen, Guiliam Dubois, and others again give vegetation its vigorous, natural green, which sometimes gets a brownish tone, sometimes a bluish. Instead of showing us views into the far distance with canals and high roads, full of busy life, they lead us away from the haunts of men into the interior of the woods, or into wooded valleys, intersected by still waters. Young Jacob Ruisdael was a follower of these artists, especially of Cornelis Vroom; his father, Isaac van Ruisdael, the framemaker, also belonged to this school, if we are right in ascribing to him the small landscapes signed with his monogram I. v. R. We still possess a considerable number of Jacob's youthful works which are accredited by dates. When Fromentin maintains that "we can neither imagine Ruisdael very young, nor very old, that we see nothing of youthful development, and notice nothing of the weight of years," this erroneous statement is only to be understood by the fact that the artist Fromentin did not know much about pictures, and that the study of the development of the old masters was really not in his line, although he has characterised them most admirably and vividly. But a historian like W. Bürger, a pioneer in modern research of Dutch painting in this direction, has also so misunderstood Jacob Ruisdael's development as to declare his waterfalls to be youthful works. Almost more incorrect is the chronological arrangement of the artist's paintings by Alois



Riegl, as given by him a few years ago in an essay in the *Graphische Künste*. Bürger's statement that Ruisdael scarcely ever dated his pictures is wrong; upon dozens of his paintings he has given name and date. These are, indeed, with just a few exceptions, the work of his youth. But we have another characteristic which at least helps us to date his paintings: we know the masters who put in the accessories. Pictures in which we find figures from the hand of a A. van Ostade, Nic. Berchem, or Ph. Wouwer-mans, we may, with great probability, ascribe to the time when Ruisdael was still living in his native town, Haarlem. When among the Amsterdam painters who inserted the accessories, we find A. van de Velde as his fellow worker, we know that these paintings must date from before 1672, the year of this artist's death; and the costumes of the little figures in most of his strand pictures and town interiors (those in the two companion pieces in Berlin and in Rotterdam are by G. van Battem) show with certainty that these pictures could only have been painted in the seventies.

A fairly certain picture of the artist's development is therefore to be obtained, even though we cannot, as with many other Dutch and Flemish artists, positively assign single paintings to a period numbering but a few years. This we can only do with works of the earliest time, from about 1646 to 1653, from which period nearly a hundred of the artist's paintings are preserved. It is not very long since people would hear nothing of an early activity of the great Haarlem master in this period, the pictures were either neglected or their genuineness doubted, in spite of the genuine signatures and dates upon them. Their early origin seemed

to contradict the supposed date of the artist's birth, which was given as 1635. But instead of examining the pictures and their signatures, instead of studying the well-known etchings, one of which also bears the date 1676, and then drawing the conclusion that the traditional date of the artist's birth must be incorrect, these landscapes with their, it must be confessed, peculiar character, were ascribed to pupils or imitators, or even declared to be forgeries. And yet the riddle that Jacob Ruisdael was said to have painted excellent pictures as a mere boy had long been solved ; for the statement of a contemporary, L. van der Vinne, according to whom Ruisdael became member of the guild in Haarlem in 1648, had already in 1870, been made widely known by Van der Willigen in his admirable historical work upon the Haarlem masters.

Characteristic of these youthful works is the unassuming motive, the apparently artless arrangement, as well as the fidelity to nature, and the industrious study of nature shown in the rendering. A sand-hill with scanty scrub and reed-grass, a sunny path between bushes, a little brook or a bog with rushes and water-flowers, an old, leafless oak between brushwood, a hut with a red roof, or a windmill on the edge of the wood, above, a dull sky with grey clouds pierced by a single, pale sunbeam : such are the simple motives which are nearly related to those of the old Haarlem masters, Vroom and Dubois. Not much skill is shown in construction ; the wealth of detail and its exaggeratedly careful execution also betray the beginner. As yet there are no views opening out a delicate perspective, trees and bushes tend to be too massive, shadows too heavy, the feeling for beautiful and simple form is not yet

developed. And yet the individuality of the master, with his delicate feeling for nature, is revealed in the way in which he characterises the different kinds of trees—by the position of the branches and leaves, by their varying angular or round treatment, by laying on the colours sometimes ruggedly, sometimes smoothly, by the different tone of the green—in the way in which he forms every detail of plant and grass, with a love which reminds us of Dürer, and then tastefully fits in every part to the whole. The artist's rapid progress can be easily traced through these youthful works. In the pictures from the end of this period we already see that he places the horizon deeper, the lines of the country are more skilfully shifted, there are views into the far distance, the shadows are clearer, the masses of light larger, the tone and colouring more faithful to nature, the artist gradually gains understanding for the rendering of cloud-forms and their influence on the lighting of the landscape. At the same time the exaggerated importance given to detail, especially in the foreground, relaxes, the composition becomes richer, more varied, more finished. Innumerable landscapes showing vegetation of vigorous green colouring and rugged colour treatment, with a view over Dutch country bounded by low hills and groups of trees, with a river or a broad road, a yellow cornfield as the point of light, some houses or a hamlet in the middle ground, date from the last years of Ruisdael's stay in Haarlem. At that time, like Rembrandt, he seems to have first paid a flying visit to Amsterdam to find a market for his pictures, and he also began to extend his journeys in search of studies beyond the surroundings of his native town. Roaming over the dunes of Noordwijk





J. VAN RUISDAEL  
THE OAK WOOD  
BERLIN





and Sandwoort he recognised the beauty of the distant view, with the high, richly diversified sky, and the landscape gradually disappearing towards the horizon ; the studies for his famous landscapes of level country are principally from this time. The artist also probably crossed the frontier of his own country then. Pictures like the overpoweringly grand view of the Castle of Bentheim, from the year 1654, in Otto Beit's Collection in London, or the Monastery—the galleries in Dresden, London and Berlin possess other and different representations of this subject—show that before the middle of the fifties Ruisdael had made the acquaintance of the hilly districts of the neighbouring German country, especially the Duchy of Cleves and Münster, with their magnificent woods and old castles. These parts of Germany, even when settled in Amsterdam, seem to have remained the principal field of his wanderings and studies. From his new residence the artist went, probably for the first time, out on the open sea, and the studies for his magnificent sea-pictures may have been made then.

We see the result of all this work in the paintings executed in Amsterdam in the sixties: the majority of them are the artist's masterpieces. Most of the distant views, the marine pieces, the wood interiors, the first winter pictures belong to this period. I will only mention the "Swamp in the Wood" in the Hermitage, and the similar picture in the Berlin Gallery, the great Oak Wood of the Vienna Court Museum (probably painted before the end of the fifties), the "Windmill on the Beach" in the Rijksmuseum, the distant view of the ruins of a castle, and the "Beach of Noordwijk," in the National Gallery, and so on. These works stand out, even among others of

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the artist, by reason of their rich and delicate composition, the taste shown in construction, the skilful subordination of the innumerable interesting details to the general effect by the movement in the air and the delicate lighting, by the clearness of the colouring, and, above all, by their great and thrilling poetic mood; they are the the grandest delineations of landscape ever produced by art.

The last period of the artist's activity, which began at latest about the middle of the seventies, shows a falling off in different directions, perhaps occasioned by the disease which carried him off comparatively early, and probably prevented him from regular study for years before, although it was not able to destroy his fondness for work; for from these last years almost as many paintings are preserved as from his earlier period. In point of technique these pictures do not come up to the early ones. The dark ground on which they are painted is frequently seen through in consequence of the colours being too thinly laid on, so that the shadows often appear too dark and uniform; the same technique spoils the blue of the ether. The drawing of the foliage, the rocks, and the other details is frequently conventional and perfunctory. In his motives, the artist, in striving after great forms and stronger effects—expressed in the most part also in the larger size of his pictures—is led into crowded construction. He no longer takes his own studies of nature for his paintings. He makes use of the pictures of friends: Everdingen's views of Sweden and Norway, Swiss scenes by Roghman and Hackaert, and others, and finds in them motives for his own compositions. It delights him now to



J. VAN RUISDAEL  
THE WINDMILL  
AMSTERDAM





paint waterfalls, broad streams which force their way through narrow walls of rock, and dash their mighty masses of foaming water down into the foreground, which is shut in by wooded mountains with castles or ruins on the heights. In such a mountain-landscape, where the tops of the mountains are lost in the clouds, the taking of the oath on the Rütli is depicted in the foreground, a proof that the artist really wished to represent a Swiss landscape, and that his interest for the grand forms of Alpine nature had led him to seek acquaintance with the history of Switzerland. In the construction of the wood-landscapes of this time we see a similar endeavour in the huge formation of the gigantic old trees, the exaggerated darkness of the woods, the redundancy of form ; occasionally the pictures contain those symbolical references praised by Goethe and mentioned above.

And so this great artist shares the fate which, at one blow, laid the entire art of Holland low after Rembrandt's death. As if only the great master-mind had been able to arrest the decay for so long !

## MEINDERT HOBBEWA

WHEN, in documents relating to Dutch art, the same story meets our eye again and again of the disregard and neglect, the want and misery of the great masters, we are easily inclined to imagine that their narrow circumstances had an unfavourable effect on the development of Dutch painting, and that this is only a weak copy of what it might have been if the position of its artists had been happier. But nearer acquaintance with the paintings and their masters convinces us that such adverse conditions rarely influenced unfavourably or even repressed the artist's activity ; indeed, they frequently had a stimulating effect and raised the quality of the work. From a purely human point of view we may regret that Rembrandt only exceptionally received public commissions, for his art it would scarcely have been of particular benefit. Does not opinion still waver as to the importance in his life's work of the " Night Watch ? " The " Conspiracy of Claudius Civilis," and the recently known composition with the triumphal procession of a Roman general, probably also an order of the town of Amsterdam, certainly do not belong to his important works. Thrown upon themselves, the masters were compelled to follow their own artistic inspiration. As with Rembrandt, so it was with most of his great countrymen ; under the pressure of outward circumstances they work with double energy



HOBBEWA  
THE AVENUE AT MIDDLEHARNIS  
NATIONAL GALLERY





and steady devotion at the development of their artistic individuality; when they suddenly fall off or abandon their art the reason is that inspiration has left them or their powers are exhausted. This can be said of Jan van der Heyden as well as of his countryman and contemporary, Meindert Hobbema.

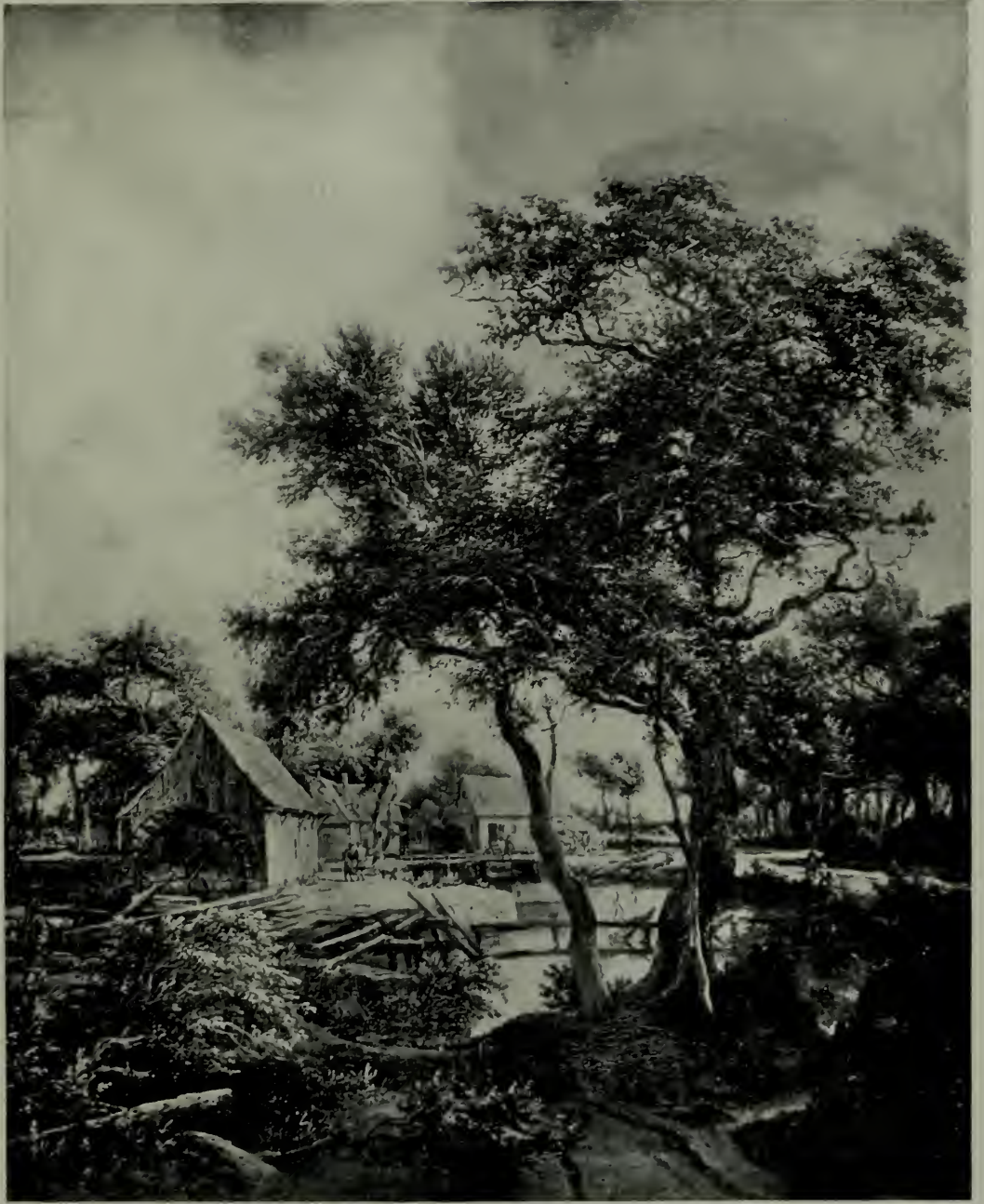
In 1668, Hobbema, then thirty, became engaged to the servant maid—she was four years his senior—of the Burgomaster of Amsterdam, Lambert Reyust. Through the influence of a former fellow-servant<sup>1</sup> of his wife, Hobbema obtained from the Burgomaster the post of a “Wijnroeijers,” a small position in the wine-customs. After having thus secured sufficient to live upon, he only painted occasionally in his leisure hours, and soon gave up doing so altogether; for although the artist did not die till the year 1709, we only possess one picture which is dated with certainty not later than 1670: “The Avenue of Middelhamis” in the National Gallery (dated probably 1689). With the exception of this work, the paintings executed about 1670 show that Hobbema’s artistic powers were already on the wane.

The documents give us the picture of a thoroughly practical, matter-of-fact man. And with this idea the character of his paintings agrees. Composition and colouring in the artist’s pictures vary as little as the motives, which are monotonous and not infrequently faithfully repeated. His simple delineations of the wooded districts of the Nether-

<sup>1</sup> For her good offices, this shrewd person was guaranteed a yearly pension of 250 florins—the deed was drawn up by a notary—to be paid till she married herself and her husband obtained as lucrative a position.

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lands, probably the landscape in Geldern: a mill between trees, a road through a wood with a small piece of water, and single houses or farm-yards, occasionally a village with a church in the distance, a ruin surrounded by light brushwood, and similar motives, are based upon careful studies from nature. We can observe this best in the "Water-mill," of which more than half a dozen renderings are preserved: two in the Rijksmuseum, Lady Wantage, the Wallace Collection, the Chicago Museum (from the San Donato Collection), each has one, and so on. The artist has altered his point of view only a little each time, and followed the model so faithfully that scarcely a tree has been moved or a contour changed. He has also represented the famous "Mill" of the Louvre with slight alterations in different pictures, which are in the National Gallery in London, in the possession of Baroness Alphonse Rothschild in Paris, and in other places. The mood scarcely differs in these repetitions: it is broad day, and pale sunlight lies over the landscape. But in spite of this the different copies of the same motive do not impress us as replicas. Few only of the artist's paintings give us the idea of any certain place being represented, as is the case with the "Villa behind a Row of Trees," which was in the Donato collection, and the "Gracht in Amsterdam," which appeared at a London sale. Thanks to his conscientious studies and his power of naturalistic presentment, he always understood how to present the simplest motive of the home landscape so freshly and convincingly, and often so impressively that a suspicion of having seen the same motive before in another picture by the artist will not enter the mind of the naïve observer.



HOBBEMA  
THE MILL  
LOUVRE

*To face p. 170*





This honest, healthy naturalism, and his free and masterly manner of manifesting it have secured Hobbema his place by the side of Jacob van Ruisdael, although the latter stands far above him in wealth of feeling, in tasteful construction, and above all in the expression of mood and sentiment. The rarity of his pictures has made them most eagerly sought after by collectors—since understanding for his art awoke at the beginning of the last century—and the circumstance that it is just his masterpieces which are to be found in prominent places, in the Louvre and in the National Gallery, has led to the artist's importance being overrated for a time, to his being placed on a level with Ruisdael—occasionally, indeed, to his being preferred to him. We cannot decidedly enough repudiate such underrating of the greatest landscapist of all time, but still Hobbema's right to a place among the first masters of the Dutch school shall not be disputed.

Hobbema was Ruisdael's pupil and friend ; he learnt from him the tendency his art took, the choice of his motives, and yet his artistic temperament is entirely different. Ruisdael shows us nature in her Sunday mood, untarnished, unsullied ; man approaches her as a devout spectator. On the other hand, a workday mood predominates in Hobbema's landscapes ; the artist presents nature as man adjusts her to his own use. Even when the accessories are almost wanting—in all his pictures they occupy a subordinate place—we feel that a scene of action for human activity is before us. And so that poetic charm which appeals to us so strongly in nearly every one of his master's paintings is wanting in his landscapes. But in its place the prose in which Hobbema speaks to us is often so vigorous and impres-

sive that it convinces and overwhelms us, and causes many poetic pictures of his countrymen to appear affected and feeble.

By his principle of composition, according to which he scatters scrubby trees singly or in little groups over almost the whole picture, instead of massing his trees as a wood or making the most of them as stately units, and by his manner of allowing single buildings to appear in between, he procures the possibility of deepening the picture without appearance of design, of widening and diversifying it in different directions. He lets the strongest light fall into the middle ground, and here he displays the greatest wealth of detail while making the foreground stand out prominently without any kind of scenic effect. He gives connection and consonance to the restless lines and forms of the landscape by the delicate air-tone which envelops the whole, by the action of the clouds, which are harmoniously built up and lighted and shed uniform light and shade over the surface. Hobbema's drawing and technical treatment are just as skilful, just as true and individual, lighter, richer, and more piquant than Ruisdael's; occasionally they are sharply emphasised, and at the same time intentionally neglected in the subordinate pieces. The grey-green of the foliage is so characteristic of his colouring that this makes his pictures conspicuous among those of all other contemporary landscapists. By the side of this colour, in the shadows a brownish, and in the lighted spots a golden tone is observable; a solitary roof with red tiles generally occupies a prominent place in the middle ground.

It is characteristic of the artist that only from time to time he puts out his whole strength, and then he creates

masterpieces of such beauty that even Ruisdael has little to compare with them. This is particularly the case with the above-mentioned "Avenue of Middelharnis." Two rows of stiff young poplars, whose branches are lopped, cut the picture into two equal halves; straight ditches and a plantation laid out with much precision in the foreground appear intentionally to increase the formal and conventional impression; and yet this does not weaken the general effect, so powerful is the effect of the air, so grandly pictorial the execution. The "Mill" in the Louvre is less peculiar in design, but just as excellent; it is a picture full of sun, full of warm, golden light, arrangement and drawing being of the greatest delicacy, and full of rare power in colouring and treatment. The representations with the same motive, only seen from another point of view: in Baroness Alphonse Rothschild's Collection in Paris, the smaller "Village with the Windmill" in the National Gallery, the "Mill" in the Antwerp Gallery, in the Dresden Gallery, and others, are nearly equal in importance to the Louvre picture. Another view, shown by the artist in different pictures—a road between trees, on one side of which opens out a broad plain covered with bushes—he was most successful in rendering in the large painting in the Otto Beit Collection. A few quite small, sketchy pictures, which give the impression of having been painted straight from nature, are unimportant by the side of such masterpieces, but of peculiar interest. Thus the two companion pieces, wooded country and a little piece of water, lately in the R. Kann Collection (formerly at Bowood), and the "View from the Dune," in the Thieme Collection at Leipzig. The clumsily formed sandhill in



the foreground, occupying almost a third of the whole picture, proves the last-named to be a study. All three have the same fresh treatment; the trees and the country are modelled in rich colour.

As we showed above, the majority of Hobbema's pictures were painted in a comparatively short space of time, and therefore a distinct development in the master's art is not discernible; in spite of this, however, some paintings stand out as works of the earlier, others as belonging to the later period. Generally the last are easily recognisable by their heavy colour, the monotonous rendering of the light, and a style of drawing the foliage and country which degenerates into mannerism. According to Paul Mantz's striking characterisation: "In these paintings the artist masses trees upon trees, he multiplies the number of the boughs, adds still more leaves to the wealth of foliage on the branches, increases the sections into which the country is cut up, allows superfluous blades of grass to spring up on the lawns." It is different with Hobbema's youthful work, which, like most of the early works of the great Dutch masters, was long passed over. The old supposition of Hobbema's being a pupil of Ruisdael had much in its favour from the affinity of the artist's paintings with much of Ruisdael's work, in choice of motive, arrangement, and treatment; this supposition has become almost a certainty since newly-found documents have proved the close connection of the two artists, which dated from the year 1661. Ruisdael only became a citizen of Amsterdam in 1659, but he had come over from Haarlem and stayed here occasionally for many years before. Hobbema must, therefore, before he came into touch with Ruisdael, have

been apprenticed to some artist, if he was not sent to Ruisdael to Haarlem. His first dated paintings, landscapes in the Edinburgh and Grenoble Galleries (both from 1659), in which the youthful hand is betrayed in a certain dry execution and awkward construction, are, in any case, nearly related to Jacob van Ruisdael in motive and in the drawing of the foliage. Still more under his influence are a number of pictures—in the Augsburg, Munich and Dresden Galleries; of late, too, and not infrequently they have appeared on the English art market. Their genuineness has often been doubted on account of their greatly differing from his other works—even from the two above-mentioned paintings from the year 1659—in the simple motives, as well as in the careless treatment and uniform brownish colouring, which often allows the brown ground to shine through the shadows.<sup>1</sup> And yet from this year (1659) there is an unimportant, signed, small picture with quite similar thin brown colouring in the Städel Institution in Frankfort, which forms the transition to these pictures. Certain characteristic peculiarities of Hobbema's are also apparent in these earliest pictures, which we must place about the years 1657 or 1658; thus the drawing of the trees, the exaggerated way in which the branches stand out sharply in the foliage, the treatment of the ground, and so on. The few, small, awkwardly drawn figures are also characteristic of the artist, and are to be found in his accredited

<sup>1</sup> These pictures have been unjustly doubted by reason of the unusual, but, generally speaking, entirely genuine signatures. Doubt is rather to be entertained with regard to the date, 1657, on the "Village with the Windmill" at Bridgewater House, as the picture shows the master's fully developed style.

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works, even when the principal figures are painted by other artists, friends of himself and Ruisdael, perhaps by A. van der Velde, Lingelbach, B. Gael, and quite exceptionally also by Th. Wouwermans.

The accessories in Hobbema's landscapes are always subordinate, and never disturbing, as is sometimes the case in Ruisdael's pictures—particularly when Berchem painted the figures and trees. Whether the reason for this lay in intentional and wise restraint on the part of Hobbema, or only in the want of means to procure richer accessories, is uncertain. The prices he obtained for his pictures (in estimates from the artist's time they are given as ten to thirty florins) were, in any case, extremely low. Even after his small official position had in some degree secured him the means of living he was never able to put by anything. At his wife's funeral as well as his own, we find noted in the church register: "pauper's funeral." In his last years the artist lived some way out of the town, on the Rozengracht, by the Doolhof, opposite the house from which Rembrandt was carried to his last resting-place. Like him, Hobbema also died in extreme poverty. Holland has indeed shown little generosity to her artists, who have been principally the means of making the glory of their country known to posterity!



## AERT VAN DER NEER

AERT VAN DER NEER is a painter of moods, like Jacob Ruisdael. But he is in no way dependent on him ; he was a generation older, and had turned fifty when Ruisdael moved to Amsterdam, where Van der Neer had been living since 1640.

The dates of Aert van der Neer's birth and death were formerly given as 1619-1683. The researches of Bredius have proved that both dates are incorrect. The artist was born at Gorkum in 1603, and died in Amsterdam on November 9, 1677. The discovery of this early date of birth was bound to create a sensation in those circles which had occupied themselves more nearly with the artist's artistic development. For the pictures, which from their style are early works, and the earliest of which, till a short time ago, bore known dates, belong to the beginning of the forties ; the artist, therefore, painted his first pictures when turned thirty-five. Bredius has also solved this riddle ; this time not from documents, but from a note of old Houbraken's, which had till then been overlooked. Houbraken only mentions the artist incidentally in speaking of his son Eglon's life. "He was the son"—this he says of Eglon in *De groote Schouburgh*, iii. p. 172—"of Aernout or Aert van der Neer, who in his youth had been steward (majoor) to the von Arkels. At that time he only occasionally



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practised art, but later, when he moved to Amsterdam, devoted himself to it exclusively, and he has become famous by his carefully executed landscapes, particularly landscapes by moonlight." These scanty notices about the artist's life have been amplified by different newly-found documents, from which, unhappily, we hear that the life of this able Dutch painter was one long struggle against extreme want, and against the neglect of his art by his contemporaries. Harassed by creditors, Van der Neer died in the utmost poverty. His pictures, which he had to part with for a trifling sum in his lifetime, were valued at his death at an average price of three florins! With his art, therefore, he could not earn enough to supply the simplest daily wants, and was compelled to keep a tavern besides and carry on a wine trade. In the May of 1659 he is mentioned as host of the "Graeff van Holland" in Amsterdam; his son, the painter, Jan van der Neer (a signed picture of his, a weak imitation of his father's art, is in the Schwerin Gallery), helped his father in the tavern.

The artist has invariably signed his pictures with his well-known monogram, but only exceptionally added the year. All the dated pictures, as far as I know, belong to the first period of his artistic activity. Only a few among them can be called a beginner's work; they are simple day landscapes, which are painted quite in the character of the older landscape school. Such a landscape from the year 1639 is in the Rijksmuseum at Amsterdam, a winter picture from 1642 is in the Martius Collection at Kiel, a similar, damaged picture in the Staedel Institute in Frankfort, the date of which is no longer entirely decipherable; a few related pictures I have occasionally

seen in the market. They nearly approach E. van de Velde's coarse, carelessly painted pictures. The Frankfort picture, a country house among high trees near some water, by simple daylight, suffers in some parts from too great carelessness and breadth of treatment. The brown ground is only partially covered in the shade, so that the picture looks like a painted drawing. But it is executed with such pictorial skill, the few local colours in the clear brownish tone are of such delicate effect that, although in the rendering of form, particularly in the foliage and in the drawing of the trees, it has perhaps the most antiquated character of all his paintings, it deserves to be mentioned before later pictures.

Van der Neer may have painted these pictures while still managing the von Arkels estate. A few years later he executed different paintings which are reckoned his best works, particularly the "Winter," from 1643, in Lady Wantage's possession, and a "Moonlight," from 1644, in the Arenberg Gallery in Brussels. Here we meet the two motives, which the artist has repeated in several hundred pictures, and which we immediately think of when his name is mentioned. He has scarcely painted a second picture to be compared to the small, bright, moonlight scene in the Arenberg Collection in clever, light handling of the brush, in vigorous light effect; it is a work which reminds us of a A. Cuyp, and even of contemporary landscape improvisations of Rembrandt. What characterises these paintings, and yet more various others in the following years, as the artist's first-fruits, is a certain unevenness, an irresolute wavering between sketchy carelessness and exaggerated care, a groping about to find the motive, also

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observable in the composition. This gives them occasionally an appearance of extreme freshness and truth to nature, but sometimes they are dry and studied, and the effect produced is scarcely a pleasing one. This last remark applies, among other pictures, to a fairly large river scene by clear moonlight, from the year 1645, in the Siersdorff-Driburg Collection (sold), to a small "Moonlight" in the Brunswick Gallery, and to a few pictures from 1646 in the Schwerin Gallery. From the same year there are works which are deeply and grandly effective, and almost broadly treated, as the "Cool Morning" in Martin Rikoff's Collection in Paris, the "Moonlight" belonging to A. Beit in London, and a larger picture in the former Schubart Collection (now on the art market in Paris). The same may be said of the "Men playing Bowls" in the Prague Gallery, from the year 1649. About the same time the effective "Vill by the Water" in the Hermitage must have been painted, where the whole sky glows in the light of the setting sun.

The way in which in this picture the sun hides itself behind the windmill, which stands out grandly and weirdly against the clear evening sky, recalls to us a similarly composed, bright moonlight scene by A. Cuyp in the Carstanjen Collection, at present on exhibition in the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum in Berlin. We are occasionally reminded of this master in other different paintings of the artist's, which, from the costumes of the figures in them, we can place in the fifties. They are large and decorative, lighter in tone, and with accessories of larger figures which used to be ascribed formerly to Aelbert Cuyp, although A. van der Neer himself was an excellent draughtsman.



Such pictures are the two effective "Evening Scenes" of the National Gallery. There are similar pictures in the Salting Collection in London, in the possession of M. Schloss in Paris, and in other places. The artist's masterpieces belong to the following period, to the end of the fifties and sixties: those effective landscapes of moderate size, with evening light or moonlight, with reddish fire-effects, or with scenery of snow and ice. They are to be seen particularly in the Wallace Collection, in the Holford, the late R. Kann, James Simon, A. Bredius Collections, in the Berlin Gallery, and in other places. Later we find the construction rather artificial, with a tendency to mannerism, the treatment gets superficial, the tone too gloomy and heavy; with most of these pictures—they are almost exclusively moonlight scenes—we feel that the artist is repeating out of his head what he had formerly seen and studied and painted over and over again, and that, to earn his daily bread, he turned out such pictures by dozens in the shortest time. And yet occasionally the great master still speaks out of them, as, for instance, in the late "Conflagration" of the Schwerin Gallery.

Houbraken gives us no information about Aert van der Neer's teacher; from no other quarter do we learn anything with regard to this. But among the older landscapists of his native town, Amsterdam, there is an artist, Raphael Camphuysen, born in 1598, who, in the motives of his pictures, as well as in conception and treatment, very nearly approaches our artist. From Camphuysen's hand we have winter pictures as well as evening scenes and moonlight scenes, which, from their affinity with Aert van der Neer's earlier paintings, lead us to conclude that they



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served him as models, even if their master was not his teacher. The overwhelming influence exercised by Rembrandt over the entire painting of Holland in the forties mainly determined the strong light effects, the *chiaroscuro*, and the frequently almost monochrome colouring.

Aert van der Neer, the humble clerk and small tavern-keeper, was a man with a deep sense of poetry, an artist with true feeling for nature, and with a delicate sentiment for the poetic mood in the landscape. These happy qualities led him from dabbling with painting to occupy himself seriously with art, and in spite of the want of recognition on the part of his contemporaries he remained true to his art till his old age, while obliged to earn his living at a sorry trade. Perhaps only the evil star which governed his development and his life has prevented the artist taking the place in general esteem which belongs to him: he deserves to be mentioned—if not in the same breath with Jacob Ruisdael—yet immediately by the side of Hobbema or Cuyp. His pictures are so individual that there would be a gap in Dutch art without them; his best works give Dutch nature lying under a peculiar spell seen and rendered by no other artist.

Van der Neer observed the landscape of his home, in all its moods, at different times of the day and year, and he invariably chose such times as gave him the opportunity of rendering strong light-effects: early morning, sunset, moonlight, or dark night, lit up by the glow of a great fire, or winter, with the glistening of the snow and the reflection of the sky upon the ice. His landscapes, therefore, generally have little local colour; all the more delicate is the toned light-effect, all the richer the well-chosen construction. A

river or a canal which stretches far into the landscape gives the pictures depth and piquant perspective. Its calm surface reflects the sky, and thus colouring and poetic mood are intensified, the mass of light increased, the life in the air repeated in a peculiar way. On the flat banks which follow the windings of the river, intersect it and cross it, small hamlets or villages, or single groups of trees, are seen as vigorous, dark silhouettes against the mass of light of sky and water; the rays and reflexes of the sun or the moon give light and life in manifold ways to the rims of the silhouettes. This design the artist treats most variously. He thoroughly knows his home, the surroundings of Amsterdam, and makes the cleverest use of his studies—a number of which are preserved in the “Print Rooms”—in the composition of his landscapes, so that also in the arrangement we nearly always imagine we have a new and picturesque view from the neighbourhood of the Y before us, occasionally too from the suburbs of Amsterdam itself.

Because Aert van der Neer liked to render moods in his landscape, such as we find in his moonlight and winter pictures, and such as have only exceptionally been chosen by other painters, he has acquired the name of having been a specialist for this kind of picture. He is therefore very frequently passed over, in the idea that we only have one of his “eternal moonlight scenes,” or one of his universally known winter pictures before us. The reason of this disregard is partly that in galleries, among other pictures, they easily appear dark or cold. When they are isolated and hung in a strong light their delicate and sometimes even grand effect is fully discernible. We shall do well to compare the artist with the greatest masters if we wish to

have a clear understanding of his individuality. In Rembrandt's interiors, as well as in his landscapes—among which a remarkable moonlight scene with the “Halt on the Flight into Egypt,” from the year 1647, has been preserved—he allows a bright ray of light to fall into the all-enveloping darkness. Aert van der Neer does just the opposite; he puts dark shadows into the general brightness, even into his moonlight scenes, the brilliancy of which he increases as much as possible, even exaggerates, in the interest of the clearness of the shadows and the pictorial effect. In the magical operation of the effect produced, Rembrandt by far surpasses his fellow-artist, but Van der Neer is truer and more manifold. No one has studied these peculiar lightings and their effect upon the landscape as closely as he has; in no other pictures do we meet with such a wealth of the most delicate observations and with such fascinating moods. The artist gives nearly the same luxuriant light to his moonlight scenes as to his views by rising or setting sun, but in the quality of the light and in its operation he observes the differences in nature with the utmost keenness. He has not only thoroughly grasped the contrast between the cold light in the early morning and the warm evening light, but also the degrees in the warmth of the lighting, according to whether the sun is still on the horizon or has already set, whether the full moon is high on the sky or just rising. And so, when looked at more closely, the same motives present the greatest variety. The same remark applies to his winter pictures. Sometimes they show the clear, cold light of a bright winter day, sometimes it is a gloomy mood with black, heavy snow-clouds on the sky. Occasionally the artist takes us into a driving snowstorm,



and shows us the landscape kaleidoscopically refracted by the falling flakes, or on a glorious evening when the northern lights glitter on the clear sky, he conducts us outside the town, on to the river or a lake, whose slippery, frozen surface is covered with numerous sledges, skaters and spectators. Some of these coloured winter pictures, as the two in the Wallace Collection, the related picture belonging to the Marquis of Bute, and a small picture in the Simon Collection in Berlin, or the similar larger painting in Major Holford's possession, are among the most perfect landscape delineations of winter.

The rich and harmonious colouring of these pictures teaches us that the unassuming, occasionally almost monochrome, colour effect of most of the others is not to be ascribed to a possible want of sense of colour, but originates in a correct observation of nature. In such pictures, too, we regularly find some little specks of colour so skilfully disposed that they form a delicate contrast to the brownish or greyish general tone of the whole. In his observation of the air, in drawing the clouds, Van der Neer is a master as Jacob Ruysdael is. In the former's pictures the clear, cloudless sky arches into infinity, and is entirely filled with atoms of air which are sometimes cool, sometimes warmly coloured. He renders the dainty cloud-forms round the moon with the same fidelity and the same taste as the gloomy cloud-masses of a snowy sky, or the whirling smoke-clouds of a devastating fire. Occasionally he ventures on the problem of representing the darkness of night illuminated by two sources of light. In the large picture in the Berlin Gallery we see a whole quarter of Amsterdam, close to the harbour, destroyed by a terrible fire; the inhabitants



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have fled out of the town and crowd together terrified at the fearful spectacle, while, at the side, the full moon rises majestically and calmly over the still water, and sheds its pale light far into the distance: a mood of striking truth and poetry. This element of mood—even though it may not be so grandly marked as in Rembrandt's paintings, and not united with the deep melancholy spirit of Ruisdael's—is peculiar to nearly all the artist's paintings, gives them their particular stamp and their singular attraction.

## AELBERT CUYP

THE charm of the Dutch landscape with its bright accessories, has found thoroughly original, native expression in Aelbert Cuyp's creations, which have, at the same time, their own peculiar style. No other country has been described so enthusiastically, represented so variously by its artists as Holland, and yet only an eye with a delicate perception for the picturesque has understanding for its landscape charms. How different, how manifold Dutch landscape appears in the pictures—only to mention the greatest masters—left to us of their home by a Jacob van Ruisdael or Jan van Goyen, a Meindert, Hobbema, or Jan Vermeer van Haarlem, a Jan van der Heyden, or Aelbert Cuyp, a Jan Vermeer van Delft, or Adriaen van de Velde, a Rembrandt, or Jan van de Capelle. Each one has discovered new, particular attractions in this landscape, has understood how to render them individually and with delicate feeling. Cuyp, too, although equally good in every branch, is primarily a landscapist; he has given his best work in his landscapes. They indeed present only a small piece of Dutch nature, the immediate surroundings of the artist's home, the Maas and its banks close to the mouth, near his native town, Dordrecht, but this is rendered all the more perfectly and peculiarly transfigured.

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Cuyp's fame is old and undisputed ; the eighteenth century admired him as the " Dutch Claude," his pictures have been as zealously sought after by collectors as those of the Roman painter who is his rival in the representation of the landscape bathed in light : and yet few know him, the public on the Continent are familiar with him only from inadequate examples of his art. In the public collections outside England the artist is everywhere poorly represented, for the few excellent pictures in the Continental museums, in Petersburg, in Budapest, and Montpellier, lie beyond the border of that domain usually visited by the art-loving public. His most remarkable pictures are in private collections, which are either out of the way or difficult of access : in the English castles of Mr. Holford, the Duke of Bedford, the Lords Carlisle, Ellesmere, Leconfield, in the galleries of the Rothschilds, in Moritz Kann's possession in Paris, in the Six Collection at Amsterdam, and in other places. The attempt to bring together his best works, which had been a success with Rembrandt's, was a failure even in London : in the Cuyp Exhibition in Burlington House, in 1903, only quite a few of the artist's really important paintings were to be seen. A correct picture of the master's importance is only to be obtained by visiting these private galleries ; but the many less important, different pictures which are scattered throughout the collections on the Continent are at least able to complete the picture of this singular artist. To appreciate his worth it is also not without importance to consider the few but explicit documents concerning the man.

Fromentin's opinion is that the artist was not thought much of in his lifetime. Thanks to modern research, we

know that just the reverse was the case. Few other painters in Holland had the position which Aelbert Cuyp held in his native town, Dordrecht. He occupied various honorary posts, was also well off and owned an estate outside the town. He had, indeed, only a name in the vicinity of his home. But just because he was compelled to work in a small sphere his individuality developed most perfectly. In the literal sense of the word he was a born artist, son and grandson of a painter, surrounded by near relations who belonged to the same craft, and were active as painters in the most different ways. As the pupil of his father, Jacob Gerrits Cuyp, whom we principally know as an able portraitist, he thoroughly learnt his profession when young. He at once attempted the most opposite branches. Occasionally we see him paint portraits, then great cattle pieces, in which the animals are still portrayed with a certain diffidence and stiffness; mostly he represents the landscape round Dordrecht, with the tower of the town in the distance. He is so busy with his painting that it is long before he thinks of settling in life: in his thirty-eighth year he takes a wife, a widow, who comes of a rich and highly respected patrician family in Dordrecht. In the enjoyment of the ample means coming to him from his father as well as from his wife, he now often accepts public offices, for which he is qualified by personal ability and character. At the same time he can enjoy country life at his ease, and pursue his out-of-door studies undisturbed after having rented the little farm of Dordwijk from a relation of his wife's. This farm later becomes the property of his only daughter's husband.



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The artist's pictures and drawings tell us of a harmonious home-life. He employed his youthful years before his marriage in industrious studies, whose fruits are preserved to us in a whole series of small landscapes, and a considerable number of landscape drawings, generally lightly touched up with paint. These productions are still so far removed from the famous works of his later period in their unpretendingness, their slight colouring, and sketchy breadth of execution, that they were formerly not considered genuine or passed over. And yet these pictures and the majority of his drawings—which were probably principally intended for albums—are invariably fully signed, and in part also dated. They are all from the forties; only some few have the date 1639, were therefore created by the artist at the age of nineteen. By attentive study of these youthful works we can easily discover the germ of his later development and rapid arrival at perfection. The simplest motives from the landscape of the Dutch coast are rendered: Views from the dunes into the country, dune-land, or desolate tracts with scanty brushwood, somewhat later also an arm of the Rhine, or the Maas with Dordrecht in the distance. They are as hastily sketched as Jan van Goyen's and Pieter Molyn's works of about ten years earlier—the artist was acquainted with their manner of painting—are almost without local colour, and almost without detail and accessories, without any special charm in construction or in shifting of line, but with still more delicate feeling for light and air, and with a predilection for a perfectly bright blonde tone of brilliant whitish colour. Among all the Dutch landscapists none has gone so far in tone-painting as young Aelbert

Cuyp.<sup>1</sup> At the same time his delight in representing animals is evidenced in pictures which are essentially different from his late works. With the industry almost of a pupil he carefully depicts in life-size and in dry colour single ducks on the water, or hens in the nest, but without any especial charm either in the general tone or in the single colour. Some larger portraits from these years have a similar character; they are mostly pictures of children, which the artist, after the example of his father, and according to the fashion of the time, painted in half-fantastic shepherd's costume; thus, in the Innsbruck and Augsburg Galleries, in the possession of Lady Wantage at Lockinge and in other places. The persons represented are insipid and even stiff in carriage and expression, are as dry in treatment as unattractive in colouring as they are baroque in conception; in every respect these works are the opposite of the clever landscape sketches. The same may be said of some Biblical representations painted at this time. "The Entry into Jerusalem," "David and Abigail," and some other similar pictures, are not much better than paintings of J. de Wet or Jan Victors, to whom here the artist appears nearly related.

We see in these pictures how difficult it was at first for the artist to render living creatures, what trouble he took with the drawing and expression. But how far his unwearied industry at last brought him, even in portraiture, is shown by a man's portrait from the year 1649, in the

<sup>1</sup> The Berlin Gallery alone possesses three such pictures; others are in Munich, Strasburg, Frankfort, Dulwich, Augsburg, in the Lichtenstein Gallery, and in other places.

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National Gallery, a picture in which the lighting is given with such truth and vigour, the expression of the personality is so powerful, the conception so grand that it maintains its place by the side of the early masterpieces of a Rembrandt. At the same time the artist's feeling for landscape becomes more delicate, the motives are richer in detail, they show greater skill, and not infrequently are already piquantly arranged, the accessories become more important and better characterised. Instead of the uniform, exaggeratedly light tone, warm sunlight now fills the landscape and permits modest local colours, particularly a dark, violet tone, to be faintly seen here and there. A characteristic picture of this group of landscapes is the "Flock of Sheep" in the Staedel Institution in Frankfort, which will have been painted about 1650. A large important picture from the same time, a "View of Dordrecht," seen from the northern bank of the Maas (it passed into American private possession a short time ago) vies in the poetic morning mood with a delicate Claude, but the colouring is still rather too light and thin, the treatment has not yet the vigour of the later masterpieces. The quite similar smaller "View of Dordrecht," in the Thieme Collection at Leipzig, is of more energetic effect. About the middle of the fifties, the artist—so far as we can date his paintings from the treatment and from the costume of the figures, for from this time they are undated—has attained full and complete mastery of his art. His prime lasted till towards the end of the sixties. From this period are those grand landscapes, flooded with golden light, the most beautiful of which is the "View of Dordrecht," in Dorchester House. From this period, too, are





A. CUYT  
RIVER SCENE WITH CATTLE  
NATIONAL GALLERY





the animal pieces, with the huge cows, on the banks of broad, sun-lit rivers.

Although his wealthy marriage gave the artist the opportunity of working on quietly, undisturbed by thought of gain, and of following his genius entirely in his creations, yet the near connections, into which he entered through his wife, with the families of standing in Dordrecht and the neighbourhood, also brought the artist many drawbacks, as he was frequently obliged to execute orders given by the rich country nobility for portraits. Cuyp, indeed, understood how to meet the wishes of his patrons, but it was not advantageous for his art. Now were painted the numerous equestrian portraits which principally belong to the later and last period of his activity: aristocratic cavaliers on horseback, alone or with their family or their servants, about to ride out, riding through their fields or meadows, out hunting or in the *manège*. A number of portraits of horses are also from this time. The artist certainly painted this kind of picture quickly, and the prices paid must also have been tempting. But the task itself was not favourable for artistic presentment. Riders are little adapted for representation—unless on a small scale, as with Wouwermans. They accord badly with the landscape and easily appear stiff. In many of Cuyp's pictures, the costume, the gay Polish frogged coats and caps with feathers, perhaps the hunting-dress of the seventies and eighties, help to heighten the baroque and theatrical impression produced. This is especially the case with the latest paintings of this kind, although some, as the two well-known equestrian pictures in the Louvre, have a stately, lustrous appearance.

Through such works the artist was led to represent pictures of horses, conceived in a genre manner: horses drinking, in the *manège*, even reviews of troops, although in smaller numbers, belong to this later period. They are generally dull in tone, without vigorous local colouring, and are wanting in the piquant charm which distinguishes Wouwerman's similar pictures, which are also designed and composed with much more imagination. It was probably Wouwerman's success with his paintings which decided Cuyp to choose such motives. Other artists also occasionally influenced him, not always to his advantage. Thus, in many of Cuyp's sunny landscapes, to which he sometimes gives Biblical or mythological accessories, we see mountains and rocks piled up in the distance or at the sides; upon them are ruins and small hamlets, and the effect thus produced is restless and artificial. His models here were probably Jan Both's Italian landscapes and some landscapes of Rembrandt's.

If we pass the artist's entire work in review, we see that it is as manifold as it is unequal. Aelbert Cuyp was portraitist, animal painter, landscapist. Besides his summer landscapes—which occur most frequently—he has also painted winter pieces, and marine pictures, pictures with evening light, and others representing night. There are genre pictures and still-life, church interiors, and historical paintings from his hand; we even know a tavern sign and decorative pictures of his. His youthful works are mostly insignificant and betray the beginner; in his late works he is only too often pedantic and unpleasing. Thus the majority of his paintings are not equal to his reputation, and it is no wonder that such an honest and

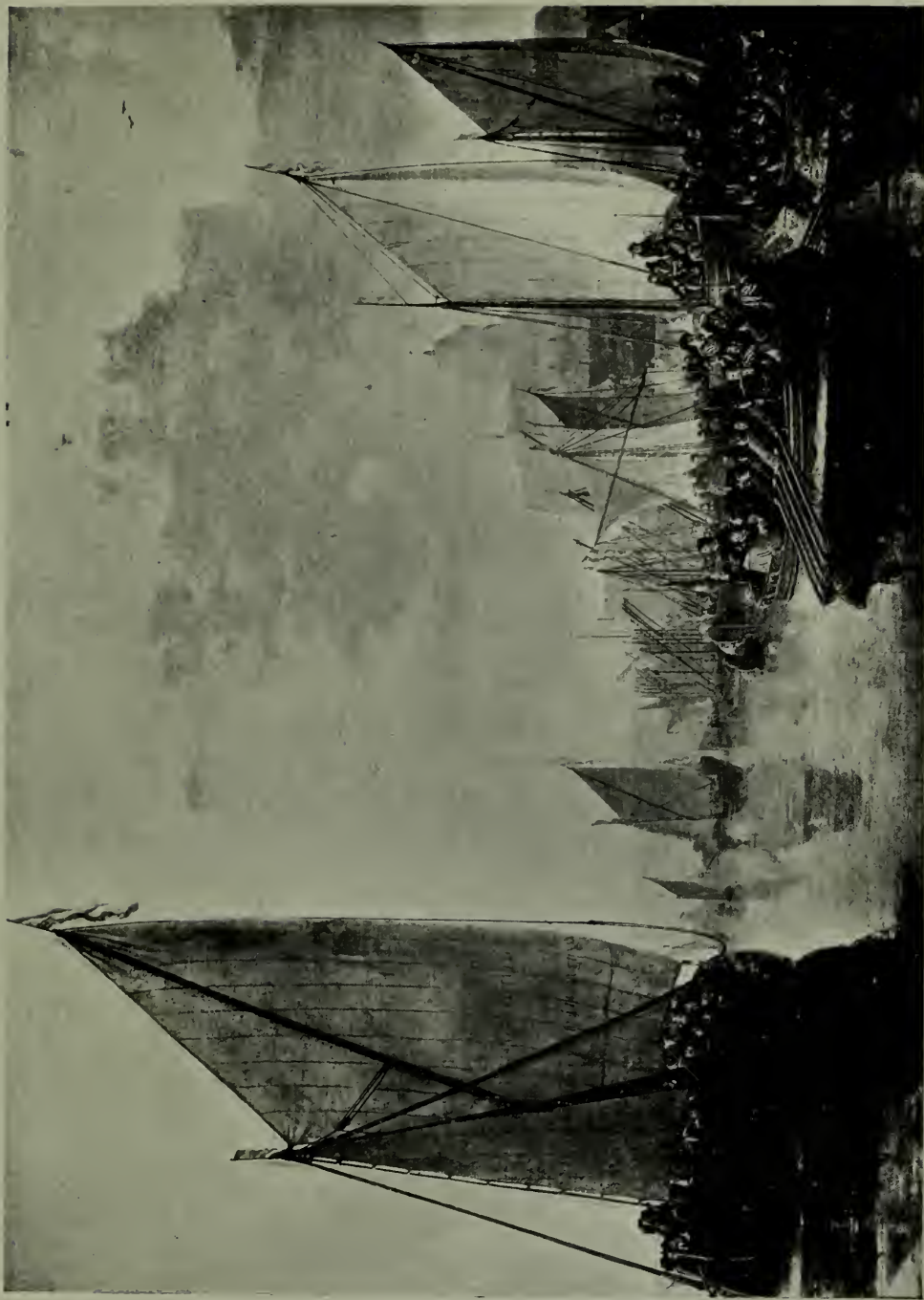
discriminating connoisseur of Dutch art as Fromentin only praises Cuyp very guardedly, and does not reckon him among the great masters, but places him below a Paul Potter. The artist may justly be reproached with great inequality, but to know his true importance, to judge whether or not he is to be counted among the great Dutch masters, we must go to his masterpieces, paintings which are to be seen in the National Gallery and in the Wallace Collection, as well as in more than a dozen private collections in England, and on the Continent in the Petersburg and the Buda-Pesth Galleries, and in different private collections in Paris. We can enumerate nearly half a hundred of such works; neither Potter nor A. van de Velde, nor Wouwermans can show a similar number of real masterpieces. These pictures have one great, powerful characteristic, otherwise alien to Dutch painters with the exception of Rembrandt; they give out a delightful, heart-warming fragrance, which we also find in the works of Claud Lorrain, who is so often compared with Cuyp. Aelbert Cuyp's art is peculiarly impersonal, entirely simple and whole-hearted, and yet how powerfully impressive it can be. Before his works we in no way think of the man, so grand and overwhelming is their impression. Has Cuyp, the able portraitist, ever painted himself? People have wished to see the artist in the sturdy, imposing figure, whose portrait, painted by his hand, hangs in the National Gallery; but this man is twenty years older than the artist was in 1649. Is Cuyp to be recognised in the grave huntsman in a gay velvet costume exhibited in the Sedelmeyer Gallery in Paris, in 1902, as a portrait of the artist painted by himself, a picture in the manner of a late Ferdinand Bol? We



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shall probably never know what the great artist looked like, he troubled himself little about leaving his picture to posterity ; in one of his paintings, in which he does reveal himself to us when out sketching, it is only from the back. It is a small sunny landscape that was in the Secrétan Collection in Paris. The artist has risen with the sun and saddled his horse. He has ridden at a sharp trot from his estate with his servant, down by the river to the neighbourhood of the sea. He has dismounted on some rising ground and draws the broad valley before him, which is enveloped in the mist of the morning sun as far as the distant sea. Thus he created a little masterpiece, which, to judge from the costumes and the style, belongs to the beginning of the master's later period, about the early sixties.

Cuyp, like all the great masters of Dutch art, is a painter of light. Each one in his way glorifies the sunlight, whose power ever and again rejoices the heart of man, and makes everything appear in particular splendour and of bewitching charm. But with none of them does sunlight play the part it does with Cuyp. With Rembrandt, with Vermeer, and all the others, part of the picture is clearly lighted, but the principal charm lies in the contrast of light and dark and in the brightening of the shadows. With Cuyp everything is bathed in sunlight, the whole landscape is steeped in a luminous atmosphere which surrounds it and penetrates it. "Only in his home on the lower Maas"—this is the opinion of a modern artist, Jan Veth, who, like Cuyp, was born in Dordrecht, and has written an excellent study of him—"only near Dordrecht could he find this happy country, where a delicate vapour from the rich marshy lands lies over the meadows,



*Photo, Walter Bourke*

A. CUYP  
VIEW OF THE MAESE WITH SHIPPING  
BRIDGEWATER HOUSE



which, in the morning and evening hours, are covered with a peculiar golden veil." And as he had learnt to see the landscape here, so he painted it; also when he went up the Maas to Nymwegen, or up the Rhine to Bingen to prosecute his studies.

His pictures give us the impression of the infinite atmosphere, from which a wealth of warm light streams out over the whole landscape. Composition, construction, the lines, are all calculated with regard to this exuberant light. If you draw the contours of any one of his pictures, it may be the most beautiful and the richest, they will appear poor, simple, and uninteresting. The form is only there to catch the light, to distribute it, or in opposition to the light and to cause it to appear all the more brilliant and warm. The background and generally also the middle ground of his pictures are so enveloped in light, and therefore so undefined that their form has little importance of its own. It would have been detrimental to the artist's purpose if he had wished to make the form more delicately effective by artificial shifting of the lines into the distance, or by any other more subtle construction of the line. With Cuyp only the foreground is of importance with regard to form, and indeed its position in the picture is decisive for the general effect, it occupies mostly about the half, later, nearly two-thirds of the picture; it is massive and vigorous. "A good and real Cuyp is a picture that is at the same time delicate and coarse, tender and rough, airy and massive." In these words Fromentin, with his usual acumen, pertinently characterises the master's art. Modern as the artist appears in many respects, he is still too much



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the honest, naïve observer also to “envelope” the foreground after the manner of certain modern impressionists ; he would have spoilt the whole picture by this inaccuracy. He devotes special care to the foreground ; here he places his important accessories, when he portrays his friends on horseback, when he paints riders saddling their horses, cows pasturing or watering, or boats taking soldiers on board. In many of his pictures the clouds are of similar importance. When Cuyp paints the early morning, which he particularly likes to do, the sky is filled with a delicate cool mist, and in the evening it is enveloped in a warm, vaporous veil ; but at broad day fleecy clouds are formed from the watery mist lying over the landscape and gather in front into light grey masses. It is true that the idea never enters our head that in this ever-smiling landscape the clouds could open their sluices. Over the cattle quenching their thirst at the water, or over the boats which take their sluggish way across the sun-lit surface of the river, these clouds form a great, full mass of vigorous and yet transparent shadow which completes the grand construction of the picture and makes the shimmering landscape appear all the more hazy and golden, while, at the same time, the sunny splendour lends to his figures a peculiar dignity and consecration.

If Cuyp has been honoured from old times as an animal painter, it is mainly owing to the powerful and grand effect made on us by his animals. In fidelity to nature his execution does not approach Potter's, and it would be in vain to seek in his pictures the nicety and glowing colour of A. van de Velde's animals. He does not even attempt it ; only animals which are drawn boldly and

grandly, are rendered simply and broadly, suit his stately, sunny landscape. His cows are of powerful build and of peculiar dignity, his horses are a sturdy race; they stand on their legs as firmly as a monument, and yet are described with broad, bold strokes of the brush as vividly and faithfully as the much more carefully executed animals of a Potter. Love for the country and country life, with everything belonging to it, and the seeing eye, speak out of all his landscapes, as well as out of his representations of animals. He lived with the animals on his estate outside the town and looked after them lovingly; out of doors as well as in the stable and at every time of the day it was his delight, as well as his profession, to study them and he continued to do so till his old age.

He was as much at home on the water as on the land. He will have passed up and down the many arms of the Maas and the Rhine in his own boat on warm summer days and clear winter nights. And in the winter he took the same way in a sledge. What he learnt thereby and how he studied we see in his most glorious pictures with the sunny views over the Maas and its side canals, with Dordrecht in the distance: the lighted harbours with the boats bringing people to and from the ships, the moonlight nights, which are almost as bright as day, with their solemn calm over the quiet water (in the Carstanjen Collection, in the Hermitage, and in other places) and those peculiar winter landscapes with broad stretches of ice, covered with sledges or skaters, are the manifold results of such excursions. In these winter landscapes where the ice is crowded with people in gay costumes, as

well as in the embarking of the troops, where the water is covered with large and small boats full of soldiers, the artist always knows how to give his pictures the same dignified calm, to produce the same imposing effect. A large boat, rowing towards us, and in which we recognise the soldiers in their gay dress, dominates the foreground in form and colour in the same manner as the stately cows the landscape; it gives the whole the majestic calm, the vigorous centre-point by the side of which the hazy landscape appears doubly sunny. Such a ship is then drawn with so much understanding, seriousness and pictorial charm that it affects us like a mighty, living creature. In those ice landscapes, which are all in English private possession, and which, strange to say, nearly all show the same place by a ruin in the middle of water, the artist has, quite as an exception, laid most stress upon the centre-point; probably because that was the only way of satisfactorily representing the gay, picturesque scene on the ice. The local colours are also usually vigorous here as they come out much more clearly and decidedly in the thin, cold, winter air, in spite of the sun which lies over the whole landscape. Thus we see that the artist, although he lived at a distance from the great art-centres of Holland, sometimes among distinguished patricians, sometimes outside in the country, always grasped every subject individually and faithfully, grandly and distinctively. This individual way of seeing, and rendering what he saw, this grand, distinguished style secures to Aelbert Cuyp his special place among the first Dutch masters.



## PAUL POTTER

AMONG Paul Potter's masterpieces are some which, from the dates on them, he painted when he was nineteen and twenty, others were executed shortly before his death. There is no essential dissimilarity between them as is usually the case with the works of artists produced at different periods. We cannot determine the quality of Potter's paintings as with most of the Dutch "Little Masters," by externals, cannot judge whether they belong to his earlier or later period—development can only be spoken of in a limited sense with a man who, scarcely twenty-eight years of age, succumbed to a malignant disease. The goodness of his work is almost entirely determined by the mood of the artist at the time, and whether the motive was one suited to his capacity. Entire failures are his large youthful pieces, as the "Bear Hunt" of the Rijksmuseum and the "Boar Hunt" of the Carstanjen Collection in Berlin. The works of larger size from his later period, as the portrait of Dirk Tulp on horseback in the Six Collection, and the study of a horse in the possession of Herr Weber in Hamburg, certainly do not belong to his best performances either. They are awkward in movement, lifeless, the treatment hard and petty. These colossal paintings which he was forced to execute for Dutch art-patrons, and for which he certainly obtained his



highest prices, are as unsatisfactory as most of his small portraits of the rich Mynheers' favourite animals which he was obliged to paint for his living are unpleasing. These pictures are mostly in private possession now (among those in museums the best is in the Louvre, another in the Schwerin Gallery). The shape of the horses—it is a heavy Spanish breed—is little attractive to modern taste; the colour of the whitish grey horses, generally peculiarly speckled, is unfavourable to pictorial effect. Added to this the animals are drawn up as if on the parade ground, in a landscape which the artist seems to have painted out of his head.

In other paintings which are also few in number, and in which figures occupy such an important position by the side of the animals that the pictures have a genre effect, the artist vies with Philips Wouwermans. But the composition is far simpler than with him. We see two or three figures and some animals with a small section of Dutch landscape: a rider who has stopped before a tavern for a drink, horses ridden to water or being shod before the smithy, a dairy maid milking and keeping off importunate shepherds and other similar subjects. These motives are simple, often coarsely naturalistic, rendered without much imagination or thought as to the composition. Potter put his best work in the simple cattle-piece; here only is he really a master, is he really unsurpassed. Out of doors in the country he was in his element, his home was the pasture-lands of the marshes.

We hear of his having different instructors, and can still trace their influence in a few, quite early, youthful

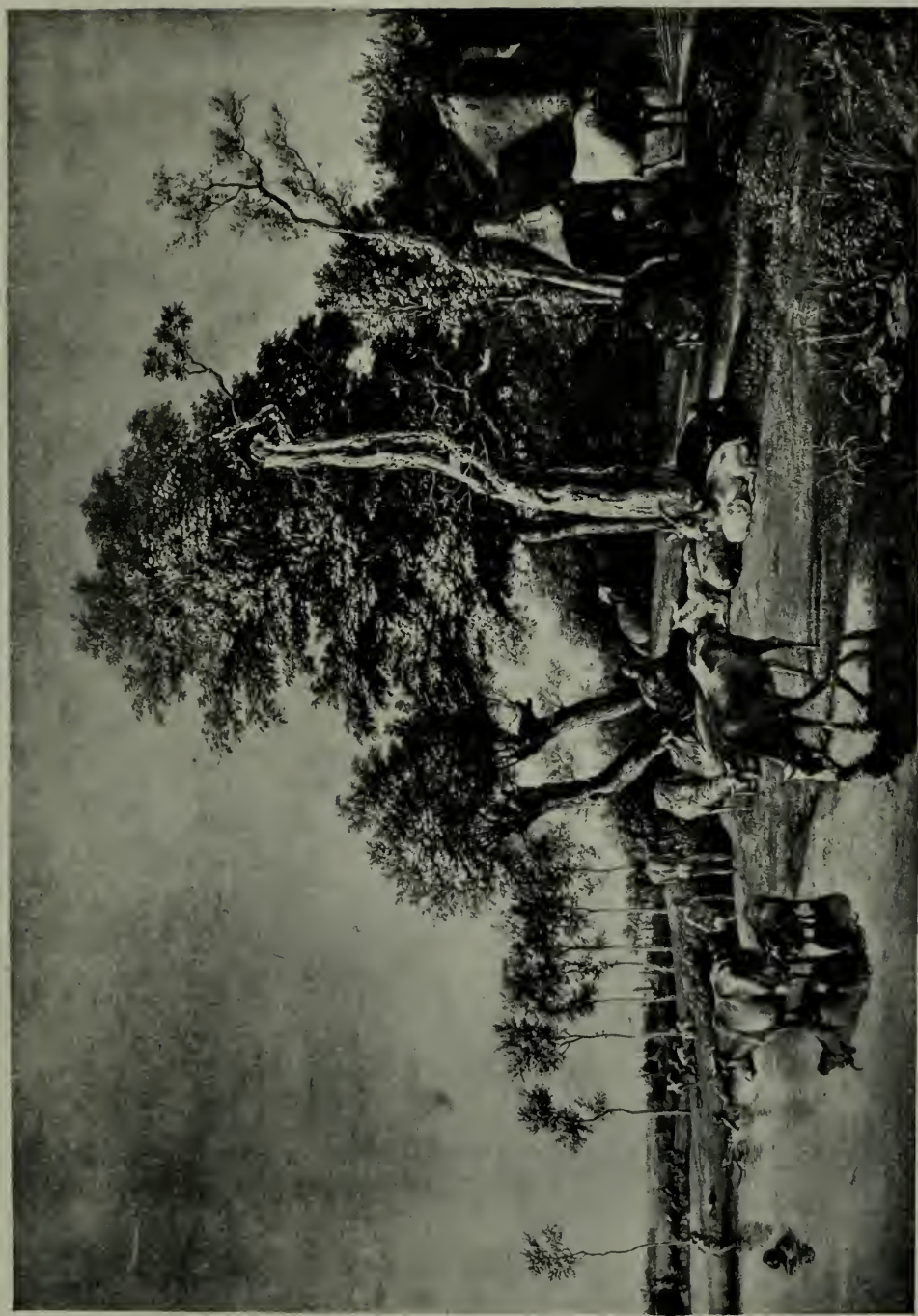
works, but his one great teacher was nature. Simple and sober-minded, with open eyes and full of enthusiasm, he pursued his studies on the meadows of his home, among the animals which surrounded him on all sides. If he was entirely wanting in imagination he made up for this defect by honesty and depth of feeling, unwearied industry and thoroughness, and by conscientiously and faithfully rendering everything he saw with his keen eyes. It was these qualities which converted the awkward, timid workman of Nicolas Moeyaert's studio into the greatest master in the representation of animal life, and that at an age when other artists were scarcely out of their apprenticeship.

Potter's talents were originally not altogether in the direction of pictorial rendering. His teachers had taught him few of the secrets of this art. He has not created many masterpieces in colour; his pictures are simple sections of nature, with little thought given to the composition; now and then, particularly in his earlier period, they are even single studies awkwardly and baldly put together. His studies from nature are microscopically precise. The greatness as well as the limitations of his art has relation to this exaggerated absorption in detail. In his pictures of colossal size he is the painter of detail and even appears petty; in his miniature-like pictures, on the contrary, he is great and occasionally even grand. When he must grasp a number of details as a whole, and give them a higher or a lower position, his talent seldom suffices, but when a multiplicity of details are of equal importance his rendering is unsurpassed.

In drawing, also, and in laying on of colour, the artist's

thoroughness leads him to dry, often laborious, execution, in which the importance of the single part is not recognised, and what is non-essential is treated in the same manner as what is essential. The foreground mostly consists of a few dexterously put together studies of great plants, a tree stump, a dead tree, and so on, while the middle ground is nearly always wanting. His careful and almost smooth laying on of the colours makes many of his pictures appear monotonous and bald; but on the other hand, the artist hereby heightens the impression of nature being here rendered as seen by the naïve observer. In this Potter approaches the great primitive masters of the Netherlands, primarily Jan van Eyck. He discovers nature for himself as they did; he strives to give what his keen eye sees, impartially and exactly, and in its whole extent. His favourite subjects are animals, the domestic animals, which summer and winter give an element of life to the pasture lands of the flat Netherlands. His entire art, his unwearied studies are concerned with them. He spent his whole life among the quietly grazing herds of cows, horses, and sheep; he studied their forms and their nature conscientiously; with the greatest love he occupied himself with the soul of the animal, and what he saw he rendered with untiring industry and unparalleled fidelity. With his unrivalled exactitude in depicting animal life, in which he is devoid of any secondary intention, and makes no attempt to evoke any particular mood, Potter's animal pictures are the perfection of what art has produced in the presentment of domestic animals. In spite of occasional blunders in drawing, which show his slight knowledge of anatomy, he gives the build





PAUL POTTER  
BOYS BATHING AND CATTLE  
THE HAGUE





of his four-footed friends in the same masterly manner as the Greek sculptors formed the human body. Like the Greeks, who left to their physicians disputes about the number of a man's ribs, his starting-point is not anatomy, but he delineates what he sees in nature with his own eyes. The material part, the hide of the animals, is modelled with every incidental detail of form and colour. From the exterior the artist penetrates into the animal's mind, describes its phlegmatic nature, its comfortable existence, its peaceful life with the rest of the flock, and in so doing brings out the individuality of each one as in a portrait. Potter is on such familiar terms with the domestic animals that, like the shepherd, he recognises each one by its physiognomy, and renders this characteristically. He is indeed so much a portraitist of animals that he is not only free from any anthropomorphism, but falls into the opposite extreme, as in representing people he does not appear free from zoomorphism. His lads and lasses, and and still more the children, have sturdy, clumsy figures, ram's noses, small eyes and broad mouths, and in their ways and manners betray that they have continually lived with cattle; they are also as good-naturedly phlegmatic as their protégés, and fit in excellently to any representation of animals. While Cuyp and Adriaen van de Velde, who approached him nearly in depicting domestic animals, like to bring in the aristocratic owner and family with his herds, Potter at most only hints at the rich patron by permitting a carriage, a horseman, or a couple taking a walk, to be seen in the distance. In the well-known picture, "Starting for the Chase," in the Berlin Gallery, we see in the foreground, between the trees of the

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avenue of the Bosch at The Hague, the prince's hounds and a herd meeting them, while the prince is only suggested by a carriage with six horses in the distance.

The atmosphere of comfort and well-being breathed by the animals in Potter's pictures is also expressed in the landscape. The construction and *mise-en-scène* are simple and show little skill or piquancy, but how delicate are the details, how sunny and harmonious is the mood. His landscape is not flooded with the full, warm sunshine of the ardent Cuyp, or diversified with the tender play of light and shade, like the sentimental Adriaen van de Velde's landscapes, but a uniform, cool, clear daylight lies over the meadows as the faithful expression of the phlegmatic sentiments of the four-footed inhabitants, and the calm mood of the artist. It is quite an exception when the artist gives another lighting. In the famous great "Bull" at The Hague, a storm is gathering in the richly diversified distance, which is the best part of the picture; in the "Horses in a Shed" in the Louvre, the landscape is overcast by a dark cloud; and in the "Pigs in the Storm," of the Brussels Gallery, a herd of frightened pigs have sought refuge under the high trees, which bend before the approaching thunderstorm. A grave and melancholy mood, reminding us of Jacob Ruysdael, speaks out of these two small, last-named paintings, which, as pictures, are superior to most of his works, and are distinguished by delicate chiaroscuro, and skilful pictorial treatment. Were they perhaps executed while suffering under the wasting illness which carried off the artist in his young years? Were they the expression of his gloomy forebodings of death? Our modern feeling and the





PAUL POTTER  
THE FARM  
MUNICH

*To face p. 206*





impression made upon us by B. van der Helst's sympathetic picture, painted in the last weeks of the artist's life, would lead us to this opinion. But such moods were probably remote from the artist's simple, entirely practical nature.

We remarked at the beginning that with Potter's short life an artistic development can scarcely be spoken of. And indeed the above-mentioned small poetical landscapes belong to his middle and not to his later period. Then again, a small masterpiece, as the "Cattle Returning to the Peasant's Cottage," in the Duke of Arenberg's Gallery, one of the artist's last pictures (1653), appears like a companion piece to the delightful, similar little picture in the Pinakothek in Munich, which was painted in earlier years (1646), while different pictures with grazing cattle in the Cassel and Turin Galleries, in the Louvre, and in other places, dating from the most various periods (between 1644 and 1652) are extremely similar in composition, tone, and treatment. But yet there are some youthful pictures which are so essentially different to his well-known works that, till a short time ago, they were unnoticed or declared not to be genuine. They are in no way masterpieces, but still are of interest, not only because they testify to the artist's precocity and his extreme industry, but primarily because we see from them how little he owed to his teachers, and how early he went his own way. They are all cattle pieces, it is true, with Biblical motives. Just as he later took Orpheus as the ostensible subject of such a picture, so already in 1642, in "Abraham's entering Canaan," a work which has come from the Höch Collection to the Germanic Museum in Nuremberg, he made the

flocks the centre-point of the picture. The figures are still stiff and conventional, and, in this as well as in the landscape, reveal von Moeyaert's influence, who is considered, and probably correctly, to have been the artist's first teacher, along with his father, Pieter Potter. But single animals are already excellent, and the dry way of painting and clear colouring, though still boyishly untrained, are essentially the same as in later years, when the artist had worked his way to greater freedom and variety. Quite similar pictures, all with cattle in the landscape, are in the Pinakothek in Munich, and in several private collections. Among them there is one that was formerly in the Felix Collection in Leipzig, another was sold with the Perkins Collection; they are from 1640, and were therefore painted by the artist in his fourteenth year. Of similar character are a few early drawings, which also date from the year 1640, and like the oldest pictures suffer from awkward arrangement, overcrowding, and weak drawing. In other works of the early period, simple studies of single animals, the artist, on the other hand, shows his peculiar talent in a quite unusual way for his age. A certain awkwardness, a manual heaviness, remains peculiar to Potter even later, but we are reconciled to these weaknesses by his honesty and naïvete. The imperfections are the rough shell of the precious kernel; they are inseparable from the individuality of this genius, who has contributed, as few others have done, so greatly to the fame of Dutch art.

## ADRIAEN VAN DE VELDE

VASARI, in his *Lives of the Artists*, is fond—almost in the modern way—of drawing conclusions about the artist's work from his character, and inversely of judging the man by his work. Thus he tells us of Antonio Rossellino that he was so modest and amiable that his acquaintances revered him as a saint, and that the winning, delicate character of his personality was also peculiar to his productions. I repeatedly think of this characteristic of Vasari's before the pictures of a Dutch master, Adriaen van de Velde. "The loveliness and clearness of his paintings, and the charm of their motives, which no other painter has ever attained" (Houbraken's words) seem to impress upon us that they are simply the faithful expression of his sentiments and his nature. His biographers, indeed, can tell us little about him, and only few documents concerning him have come to light, probably because this unpretending man, as Houbraken says, "geregelt en geschikt leefde." But the picture of himself the master has left behind him—in his masterpiece which adorns the Rijksmuseum to-day—is well fitted to confirm the impression we gain from his paintings.<sup>1</sup> Here we see the young artist with his wife and his two children, the youngest in the nurse's arms,

<sup>1</sup> This picture, from the van der Hoop Collection, has always been considered as without doubt the portrait of Adriaen van de Velde and his family, and is even mentioned as such by the latest Dutch inquirers,



taking a walk outside Amsterdam; behind him is his carriage which has brought him out of the town and which follows slowly. He would not represent himself in his shut-in town home, but outside in the country, along the road he so often went to his studies, together with his family, and the splendid grey horses from his stables which, like all animals, were dear to his heart. With his grave and winning appearance, slender figure, and pleasing features, the artist looks like a prosperous Amsterdam burgher, domestic and proud of his birthplace; he shows himself to us as a true friend of his country and of country life. We know that he was a kind and helpful colleague to all the landscapists of Amsterdam who applied to him to have the accessories of their pictures painted by his skilful, rapid hand. In hundreds of landscapes produced

as Dr. A. Bredius. And yet Bredius repeats van Gool's statement that the artist earned so little by his work that his wife had to keep a linen shop to support the family. This accords little with the stately figure of the Dutch Mynheer who keeps his own carriage! On the other hand, the great number of widely different works produced by the artist in a few years is an argument against the assumption that he was poor, as is also the fact that his funeral cost fifteen florins, a sum which, at that time, could only have been expended by persons possessing some fortune. If he had really had to struggle with want, research in Holland would long ago have brought to light from the archives, promissory notes, distrains, and similar documents, which are notoriously the evidence we most frequently have to rely on for information about the lives of the best Dutch artists. But even assuming that Adriaen was comfortably off, I have never been able to suppress a strong doubt as to whether he was even able to make such an appearance as this young gentleman in the Amsterdam picture of the year 1667, and whether he could keep his own carriage with the fiery Brabant horses. It is not easy either to reconcile the dates of birth of the artist's children with the age of the two children in the picture. The fact that there is a handsome villa visible in the background, behind the group, makes it much more probable that a rich Dutch patrician on his estate is represented here.



A. VAN DE VELDE  
AFTERNOON  
BERLIN



in Amsterdam soon after the middle of the seventeenth century, van de Velde's groups of small figures and animals introduce a pleasing play of light and shade and give the impression of fresh and joyous life, which not infrequently is the principal charm of such pictures. It is this charm, this peculiar Sunday mood, which especially attracts us in his own works and makes us feel drawn to the artist, who gains our particular sympathy by his being called away from his work and his family when quite young.

Adriaen van de Velde belonged to an artist family, which in half a century produced no fewer than six important masters. As son of one painter and younger brother of another, he could cultivate his talent from childhood, and grew up, as it were, in the profession. His chance of being able to develop in the direction of his own inclination and his own gifts he owes to the sound educational tact of these artists. We find proof of this in various works which are preserved to us, and which date from a time when Adriaen was scarcely more than a boy: etchings and drawings from his seventeenth and paintings from his nineteenth year. His single cows at pasture, the small landscapes with accessories, and the figures and animals which he painted at that time in Philips de Koninck's landscapes, have not the least connection with the art of the father, Willem van de Velde, the marine painter, and very little with that of Jan Wijnants,<sup>1</sup> who is also mentioned

<sup>1</sup> The date of Wijnants' birth is generally given too late, even in the newest Dutch catalogues. It can be deduced from a notice published years ago by F. W. Unger in *Oud Holland* (ii. p. 165, note 3). Among the painters who are mentioned as members of the Retorijkerkamer "In Liefde Boven Al," Jan Wijnants is noted, and already in 1626. According to this he must have been born at latest in 1605.



as his master. They rather reveal an artist whose attention had been directed to nature from his childhood, who had grown up amid the surroundings of his native countryside, studying its forms and its appearance, together with the accessories diversifying it. In the artistic elaboration of his studies, however, he was stimulated by the example of a few older masters who were living in Amsterdam when he was receiving his first instruction there ; by Paul Potter, and even, though perhaps in less degree, by Karel du Jardin. Potter, indeed, died in Amsterdam when young van de Velde was only sixteen years old, but the latter was at that time in a certain sense an artistic personality. In many respects Potter's pictures remained the young artist's models during the following years, and exercised in some ways a lasting influence upon him.<sup>1</sup> The small, pastoral pictures of Dutch grazing lands with cattle scattered about, more than a dozen of which are preserved to us from the years 1655 to 1659 ; the large single farms with cattle, from the same period, in which occasionally, as in some of Potter's paintings, the figure of the owner is portrayed (the best known of which are in the National Gallery and in Grosvenor House); even the single richer compositions, the "Riding to the Hunt," the "Manège," and other like motives, all clearly show that they depend on, and are influenced by, similar pictures of Potter's. But in spite of this van de Velde has entirely preserved his artistic individuality ; indeed, the works of this early period, many of which exhibit Potter's influence, are really his most indi-

<sup>1</sup> According to Granberg a painting, with relatively large animals, in Count Wachtmeister's Gallery in Vanas, in Sweden, dated 1656, is strongly influenced by Potte

vidual and freshest, and show how very naïvely and delicately he has turned to account his lively impressions of nature. The two artists, nearly related as they are in their motives, are yet essentially different in character, in their conception, and in their manner of presenting the subject. While Potter's works reveal a simple, manly nature, van de Velde's art has a feminine, delicate character; if the former is uncertain in composition, often wanting in finish, and awkward, the development of the latter is early accomplished, and as time goes on he inclines rather to routine; one is only an animal-painter, the other is many-sided, and with his delight in representing animals unites a remarkable feeling for landscape; the latter is almost without training, and very exclusive, the former receives stimulus from all sides, but is in return always ready with his art to help others.

Besides Potter, Karel du Jardin, and Nicolaes Berchem have influenced Adriaen van de Velde's development. In numerous pictures by the artist, even in some etchings and in many drawings, the landscape and the figures of shepherds which give life to it have an Italian character. From this it has been concluded that he was in Italy, a supposition that will probably arise in the mind of every art-historian in looking at his pictures. However, it is striking that there are only solitary examples of these southern motives; they occur occasionally in his earlier period, more frequently in his later work. When we examine the pictures attentively this Italian character is seen more in outer detail: in single houses, churches, and castles of Italian architecture, in ancient ruins and in the Italian, or, strictly speaking, in the would-be Italian dress

of the shepherds; the character of the landscape, with its forms and its vegetation, as well as that of the accessories, remains Dutch. This almost forces us to suppose that the artist has borrowed those motives from older colleagues whom the custom of the time, and perhaps, too, their own longing to see the country, had taken to Italy. If he had been in Italy (none of his biographers speak of this), the industrious and conscientious master would have made numerous studies of Italian motives, and would have rendered the Italian character more faithfully and convincingly. But no decision has been as yet come to with regard to this.

A. van de Velde has not only borrowed single motives, and that piece-work of Italian scenery already alluded to, from Karel du Jardin and Claes Berchem's paintings, he may also have taken his manner of composing partly from them. This applies particularly to his later pictures with the shepherds, who are resting by their cattle on the outskirts of the wood in the evening, or driving their cattle through a brook, to his ferry-boats with Italians on board, and to similar subjects. It is possible that Philips Wouwermans, who is mentioned as one of his teachers, has also furthered the young artist's skill in composition and stimulated his imagination. But these artists were as little able to alter van de Velde's peculiar character as was Jan Wijnants, who is also considered as his teacher, and who owes the best part of his own pictures, the accessories, to his supposed pupil. Adriaen van de Velde stands high above them and deserves his place by the side of Paul Potter and Philips Wouwermans, even if he is not equal to the one in honest intention and



unerring observation, nor to the other in fertility and inventive genius.

The artist's œuvre is very manifold, and not only with regard to technique—he is known as an industrious etcher, as draughtsman, and as painter in water-colours as well as oils—there is also great variety in the motives of his pictures, and in contrast with Potter he is generally successful in subjects which lie outside his particular line of work. We have already mentioned the masterly portrait picture in the Rijksmuseum, known as the artist's family; even if we bring the subject into the master's peculiar sphere and treat the whole as a "landscape with figures," yet the figures are executed in such a masterly way that they would do honour to a Thomas de Keyser or Ter Borch. This also applies to his own half-length portrait in the Scheurleer Collection at The Hague. We also know a small genre picture in the Dresden Gallery, painted by the artist in 1661; it shows the half-length figure of a young woman who raises a glass to her lips. Such a feeling of comfort and well-being pervades the picture, the tone is so delicate, the treatment so dainty, that it comes up to Metsu's contemporary paintings. The catalogues also note Biblical and mythological subjects, and even pictures of scenes from the stories of the saints by Adriaen van de Velde. The Catholic Church of the Augustines, "de Ster" at Amsterdam, still possesses (now in the clergyman's house) the five pictures of the Passion mentioned by Houbraken. The figures are about half life-size, and though the details are admirable, particularly in the Gethsemane and in the mocking of Christ, and the drawing and modelling are of



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academic excellence, yet they show that here the artist is not in his own province. Generally speaking, such historical motives, as the large "Flight of Jacob" in the Wallace Collection (1663), "Mercury and Argus" in the Dutuit Collection in Paris and in the Liechtenstein Gallery (1663), "St. Jerome" in the Schwerin Gallery (1668), and various others, only serve the artist as an excuse to represent animals out of doors, and are not very different from his usual pictures.

His landscapes, on the other hand, have a character of their own. It has, indeed, been maintained, but quite unjustly, that Adriaen van de Velde was not a real landscapist. I incline to rate him highest just as a landscape painter, and to rank him with masters like Hobbema and Philips de Koninck; he even touches the incomparable Jacob van Ruisdael sometimes. His conception of nature is indeed different from that of these artists. Nature, in her solitude, "where man with his troubles never comes," he does not know; it does not exist in his artistic imagination, which compels him to people the landscape with figures in the most manifold way. Nature would seem to him empty without those living creatures for whom, according to his feelings, it is alone created. For him it is a stage on which man, with his domestic animals, moves. He puts down what he sees, the impressions he receives every day outside the gates of his native town. Life on the high road, on the pasture-lands, in the wood, on the beach and the sand-hills, he depicts richly and variously, with delicate feeling, and with as much taste in conception as skill in arrangement. A delightful holiday calm lies over the meadows, it is the serene splendour of a sunny

day, toned by the mist from the near ocean. And this Sunday mood is heightened by the spruce figures who are taking the air on foot, or in splendid carriages or on horseback, and by the animals grazing on the meadows, or quietly and comfortably enjoying the shade under the trees.

Strictly speaking the artist's strand-pictures must be called landscapes, although fishermen and skippers, carriages and carts, children and pedestrians play an important part in them and have considerable influence on the impression produced. Such pictures are "The Beach at Scheveningen" in the Cassel Gallery, a masterpiece, although one of his earliest pictures (1658); the similar paintings in Buckingham Palace and in the Louvre (both from 1660); the clever, fresh nature-study in the Six Gallery at Amsterdam; and the pictures belonging to Mrs. Ashby in London) formerly in the possession of the Duc de Morny), at The Hague (1665), and in English private possession (mentioned by Waagen when owned by Mr. Chapman as the largest and best picture of this kind; dated 1665); and lastly, a small picture of little importance in Boston owned by Mr. Quincy A. Shaw.<sup>1</sup> All these pictures show such true feeling for landscape, such delicate observation of light and air, such accuracy of tone that they vie with modern plein air pictures; but with these qualities they unite skill in building up the landscape, mastery in drawing and distributing the figures, clearness and charm of local colour, a fusion and a pre-

<sup>1</sup> Herr James Simon, in Berlin, possesses the same motive in a magnificent larger painting by Willem van de Velde (1659), which however, derives its life and character from the delightful and rich accessories inserted by Adriaen, and thereby almost bears the stamp of the younger brother's work,

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cision in the execution such as no modern master has ever achieved or even striven after. Of similar charm and related mood are some simple marsh landscapes with grazing cattle, belonging to the same early period: "Cattle by the Canal" in the Thieme Collection at Leipzig (1658) is still somewhat rambling in composition, but the clear, hot summer day is most delicately effective; some similar sunny little pictures are in the Arenberg Gallery at Brussels, in the Weber Collection at Hamburg (both dated from 1655), and also in the possession of George Salting in London (1658); lastly, the "Flat River Landscape" with the grazing horses and the country house in the middle-ground in the Berlin Gallery; the last-named is of rather later date, but with all its fidelity to nature the composition is masterly, full of the enchantment of a warm summer morning's calm, far away from the noise of the great town.

His true and keen observation, as well as his fidelity in rendering what he has seen is also shown in these landscapes by the way in which the time of day is made apparent. We observe this still more strongly in some other pictures with different motives. This is the case in the delightful "Sunset" of the Louvre, a picture full of wonderful truth in the light of the sky; in the "Farm" of the Berlin Museum (1666), as well as in two pictures of the Staedel Institution in Frankfort. In one of them, the little meadow in the wood with browsing deer (1658), the darkness of the wood by approaching night is sketchily rendered,<sup>1</sup> but with the greatest delicacy and poetic feel-

<sup>1</sup> There is an entirely similar picture in the National Gallery, and a larger one in the Edinburgh Gallery.





A. VAN DE VELDE  
STAG-HUNTING  
STAEDEL MUSEUM, FRANKFURT





ing, while the bright morning mood of a sunny June day laughs out of the other, a fairly large wood-landscape with a stag hunt. The masterpiece shows us what an important part of the landscape the accessories are with Adriaen van de Velde. The melancholy mood of the woodland solitude in a painting by Jacob van Ruisdael would be grievously disturbed by the loud halloos, the turmoil of deer, hounds, hunters and drivers; here, on the contrary, the accessories seem to be a necessary element of the landscape. In pictures of this kind, another and prominent quality of van de Velde's, which characterises him as a really modern artist, comes out vividly: the naturalistic rendering of the foliage. The "Hunt" shows the bright green of spring by sharp, cool daylight; the "Meadow in the Wood" the brownish colouring of approaching autumn at night-fall. Similarly delicate nuances in colouring are to be noticed in the above-mentioned early picture of the Thieme Collection in Leipzig, as well as in the "Farm" of the Berlin Museum, and in the "Horses Grazing" at Windsor (1657). In the sharp distinction the artist makes between different kinds of trees in the drawing and colouring of their foliage and trunk, as well as in his characterisation of plants and herbs he far surpasses most of his contemporaries. We may refer to the large picture of the artist's family in the Rijksmuseum (1667), and to quite a small picture dating from the year 1661, formerly in the Perkins Collection, as examples of the delicacy with which he occasionally treats the ground.

Adriaen van de Velde's faithful and naïve observation of the times of day and seasons of the year comes out

particularly clearly in his winter pictures. They are widely known, as they are nearly all in the great public collections : in the Louvre, in the National Gallery, in Dresden, and in Antwerp ; Baron Edmond Rothschild in Paris possesses a small one. In contrast with the strand pictures and most of the above-mentioned landscapes, these winter scenes were painted in the artist's later period, in the years 1668 and 1669, but none of them have the weaknesses of many other late works ; on the contrary, they are clear and bright, the treatment is soft and blended, the cool tone corresponds with the winter mood, drawing and composition are excellent ; they put before us faithfully, and at the same time most attractively, the country and life in Holland at the artist's time. We can also observe here most clearly a peculiarity of the master's which perhaps explains why he is not considered a real landscapist. The rich accessories almost entirely eclipse landscape detail, the shifting lines of the ground, the trees, plants, and so on, so that we imagine we have genre pictures before us. But the artist makes skilful use of them to heighten the landscape effect of the pictures ; with their help the feeling of space is deepened, the light and atmosphere are more subtly rendered.

This genre character in the landscape comes out more strongly when figures and animals become larger and occupy more room in the picture. In such unaffected and graceful scenes from country life in Holland, the artist—when he has not borrowed them from pastoral life—approaches Philips Wouwermans, whose earlier and more simple work, at all events, may have continued to exercise some influence upon him.

Most of these rarer paintings show us the pastimes of the aristocracy in the country. The artist knows how to invest them with an additional and quite individual charm by the stately bearing and beauty of the figures, the splendid costumes, the noble breed of horses and hounds, the vigour and harmony of the colours, as well as by the delicate drawing of the little figures and the daintiness of the painting. His favourite motive is "Starting for the Hunt." There are well-known masterpieces representing this subject, all dating from the sixties, in Buckingham Palace (1666), in Alfred Rothschild's Collection in London (from 1662, formerly belonging to Lord Northbrook, who still possesses a similar little picture from the same year), and in the Rijksmuseum. An original and lively picture is the little-known "Vedette," in the Gothic House at Woerlitz (1659). The Cassel picture is similar (1662); it represents a company of aristocratic travellers who inquire the way of shepherds. One of the most mature and attractive compositions of the same kind is the "Halt at the Tavern," in the Leipzig Museum: it dates from the last period. The Stroganoff Gallery in St. Petersburg possesses a similar motive. A "Halt at the Smithy" in Rotterdam, a "Hay Harvest" at The Grange, in the possession of Lord Ashburton, a "Riding School," belonging to Herr de Jongh in Paris, are nearly related to these pictures.

The usual statement that Adriaen van de Velde never painted an interior is not quite correct. We have already mentioned the small genre picture in the Dresden Gallery. There are also two regular interiors which were in the market about twelve years ago; unhappily I do not know what has become of them. Both show stables with fowls



and dogs running about among the horses ; everything is carefully painted straight from life in the manner of a portrait ; the composition is unassuming. Perhaps they are studies of the artist's own stables. A third and similar little picture, belonging to Herr van Valckenburg at The Hague, is apparently an early work ; and there was a stable with various animals, more delicate and tender in the treatment of lighting, in the Düsseldorf Exhibition in 1906. But these few unimportant interiors do not disprove the fact that van de Velde's whole delight was to live out of doors and to paint what he had seen. The fidelity with which he renders this, occasionally almost in the spirit of modern plein air painting, has led artists to suppose that he also painted his pictures out of doors, a supposition which is certainly erroneous. We know that the Dutch of that time never did this, and van de Velde's pictures are generally so artistically composed, often contain such far-fetched motives, that this would make it impossible. The innumerable little figures and groups, which the artist inserted in his friends' landscapes, have the same surprising fidelity and delicacy in the way in which they are lighted and spaced, but it is out of the question that they should have been painted into other people's pictures out of doors. But by his industrious studies out of doors with pencil and brush — particularly mentioned by Houbraken — by his living with nature, the artist from his childhood so trained his eye and his memory that his pictures impress us as being painted direct from nature.

Till now we have only incidentally touched upon those paintings which have made van de Velde famous : his bucolic representations, shepherds and shepherdesses with

their cattle in the landscape. These pictures, in spite of their repute, do not give us his best work. The earlier pictures, with a few scattered animals grazing or resting on the meadows, are simple studies without any special composition, similar to the well-known etchings of the same period, about the years 1655 to 1659. Richer compositions, as the farms with cattle in the National Gallery and at Grosvenor House (1658), are not yet very skilfully arranged, and the execution is rather hard. The later pictures of this kind mostly suffer from the opposite fault, being too much composed and interspersed with motives borrowed by the painter from the Italian studies of his artist-friends. They have, too, not infrequently suffered from careless technique, in consequence of which the Bolus ground has come through, and some colours, particularly green, have changed. The artist, whose early pictures are excellently painted, and have remained clear and luminous, adopted in his last years the careless, modern manner of painting, which Italian travellers, the "bentveughels," brought with them from the South. This manner is an outward sign of the decay of Dutch art which began with Rembrandt's death as at a given signal. But still there are some excellent productions among van de Velde's late work, as the pictures in the National Gallery, in Buckingham Palace, at The Hague, in the Rijksmuseum, in the possession of Prince Liechtenstein, and in other places.

The artist's drawings, a considerable number of which are preserved, starting from the year 1653, as proved by a dated leaf in the British Museum, are mostly of kindred character to the bucolic paintings; the animal studies, as well as drawings of the nude, are faultless in drawing and

execution, but produce an academic, almost bald impression, which is partly caused by the material used, red chalk, or light water colour. The finished drawings and water-colours seem mostly to have been intended for albums; they have something of the tediousness of such work. His etchings, of which there are dated leaves from 1653 till 1670, are more unassuming, and at the same time more characteristic of his peculiar technique. Only some few, particularly the three quite early leaves from the year 1653, show richer composition in the style of P. de Laer, and of early works by Wouwermans; the later ones are excellent, broadly treated studies of single animals at pasture.

We should give but an inadequate account of Adriaen van de Velde's activity and importance if we overlooked the delicate figures and animals which he inserted in almost innumerable landscapes by his Amsterdam colleagues. There is scarcely a landscapist of that time in Amsterdam who, even if he were a skilful figure-painter himself, has not taken advantage of the artist's talent and obligingness. The young artist's sureness and taste in designing and placing his little figures and animals, their drawing, and the way in which he adapts them to the landscape in colouring and treatment, sometimes giving them a modest subordinate position, sometimes, by means of air and colour, making them the centre-point of the picture, fills us ever and again, and before every picture, with wonder and admiration. How rugged and broad is the treatment of the accessories in Philips de Koninck's large landscapes; how neat and accurate in the town-pictures of his friend, Jan van der Heyden; how bright and brilliant in the monotonous landscapes of a Jan Wijnants or Frederik



Moucheron. There are said to be more than 150 pictures by Wijnants, the accessories of which are painted by van de Velde, more than fifty pictures of van der Heyden's which contain little figures from Adriaen's hand. Jan Hackaert, Frederik Moucheron, Philips de Koninck, Jacob van Ruisdael, M. Hobbema, Willem van de Velde, and others, even the excellent figure-painter Eglon van der Neer, have profited by his help in a similar way. In most of these pictures the accessories materially help to determine the character of the landscape, they heighten the pictorial effect, and they also impart that peculiar, serene holiday mood which makes the personality of the artist so dear to our heart.



## PHILIPS WOUWERMANS

THE Haarlem Philips Wouwermans' field of work is the same as that of Paul Potter and A. van de Velde: the inhabited landscape. Like these artists too he scarcely crossed the borders of his native country. Like them he died young and yet accomplished astonishingly much in his life; he is indeed the most prolific of all the Dutch "Little Masters." When his name is mentioned we are accustomed to think of his white horse, to think of him as an excellent painter of horses. But this reputation is not even founded upon the artist's most remarkable gifts. As a genre painter and a landscapist Wouwermans is just as excellent, but he proves his superiority chiefly by the new and original way in which he handles the most manifold motives, converting each one by his pictorial talent and his rich imagination into a finished work of art. An observer, as few others, his artistic eye was constantly discovering new and telling subjects in the outdoor life of the people; his rich imagination gave to these subjects a new and quite peculiar life. This poetic gift—which, if we make a reservation in the case of Rembrandt, we may say was only possessed in the same measure by Jan Steen among all the Dutch painters—frequently imparts to Wouwermans' painting a singular, novelistic character. We imagine we have scenes from a romance before us:



PHILIP WOUWERMANS  
INTERIOR OF A STABLE  
NATIONAL GALLERY



so pointed and piquant are the motives, so vividly are they presented ; and yet the artist is never obtrusive or studied, the pictorial effect always takes precedence of the story so that his pictures never become illustrations.

Wouwermans' facility of work has almost become a proverb. The man whose life came to a close the day before he had completed his forty-ninth year, who was rich enough to put his work aside, if he liked, has yet painted probably a thousand pictures, and has besides put the accessories into numerous paintings by different artist-friends. The number of paintings preserved is certainly not reckoned too highly at seven hundred. The Dresden Gallery alone possesses about sixty pictures, the Hermitage can produce a similar number. If we add that many among these contain numerous figures and animals, often a hundred and more, and that with all their pictorial treatment they are invariably delicately executed, almost in the manner of a miniature, we shall not call in question the reputation of the artist for being almost unequalled in facility of work, in rich imagination and in industry.

Only occasionally does he present other than his usual motives ; in these rare cases, in the "Preaching of John" in the Dresden Gallery, and particularly in the "Ascension" in Brunswick, the composition is quite drawn into the sphere of his usual genre pictures, so that it almost appears like a parody. But when he remains within his own province he does almost equal justice to every motive ; his restless imagination and brilliant plastic faculty are revealed in the design and in its rich development.

The events of the Thirty Years' War, under whose influence the artist had grown up, occupy an important



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place in his work. Numerous paintings depict a field of battle. Imperial Horse charge a troop of Swedish cavalry or are received by the raking fire of the hostile infantry ; a place occupied by the enemy is stormed by the allies, or the garrison of a besieged fortress sally out upon the enemy ; soldiers plunder a village and the inhabitants offer a feeble resistance ; marauders and bands of robbers in the wake of the army wander over a battlefield in search of prey or devastate a peasant's farm ; spies are brought in and made short work of. Another time the General reviews his troops ; we see an outpost interrogating peasants, or officers engaged in an affair of honour ; or we are taken into the camp where waggon-loads of forage are arriving, where couriers come and go, where the soldiers are drinking and playing cards in the canteen with all kinds of doubtful characters about them. All these checkered scenes and these vicissitudes of the terrible war which Grimmelshausen's "Simplicissimus" has brought home to us in all their naked truth, are so impressively, richly, and variously delineated in the paintings of Wouwermans, with all their natural liveliness the finished composition gives them such artistic shape that we may say no other piece of history has ever been related by any artist as artistically and truthfully. Besides these skirmishes, which Wouwermans depicts so vividly that he makes us think he has seen them quite near, he likes to paint the battles fought by the imperial troops and the Poles against the Turks. Of these he only knew by hearsay, but they made a great impression on his mind, as on all the Christians of that time.

By the side of the battle-pieces and the various subjects

from military life, scenes from peaceful life on the high road, in the field and in the wood, play as important a part in his pictures. The sport patronised by the country aristocracy, particularly hunting, finds frequent pictorial presentment. The hunting party, ladies and gentlemen on horseback, assemble at the gates of a stately country house, where they are awaited by the huntsmen with the hounds and the drivers. A halt is made at a spring to water the horses, or for the party to take a drink themselves, while at the side a young lady receives the attentions of one of the gentlemen, or a hunter pays rough court to a peasant girl who is fetching water from the spring. Then the hunting party goes on its way. At last they are on the track of the stag; occasionally it is a fox, a wolf, or even a bear—the hounds have reached him, the drivers summon with their bugles the hunters who come galloping through the coppice from all sides; the stag is killed, or the falcon has struck down the heron, the meal which has been brought in a cart is taken in the wood, or the spoil is brought back to the mansion and spread out before its mistress in the presence of the hunters who get off their horses and unsaddle them.

Another time a visit is to be paid to friends; a carriage and four takes the ladies, the gentlemen ride in front or follow after. We accompany them for a time on their journey. Gipsies have encamped at the corner of the wood, ragged children press up to the carriage to beg, a young lady stretches her white arm out of the window to an old gipsy, who tells her fortune from the lines of her hand; a halt is made at a smithy as a horse has lost a shoe; in a ravine which has been desolated by a mountain

torrent the horses are thrown into confusion by meeting a herd of cattle ; close by a shot falls and kills one of the horses and a driver, robbers dash out of the ambush, plunder the travellers, ill-treat them, cut the cords which bind the luggage to the carriage, and ride off in hot haste as the sound of horses' hoofs announce the approach of riders bringing help.

The life of the countryman in his fields or in his farm-yard and on the high road has also furnished Wouwermans with just as numerous, just as picturesque and charming motives for his paintings. We see the peasant in the stable harnessing and unharnessing his horses, we follow him out into the fields, watch him turning the hay at the harvest, bringing home the grain. Then the artist takes us with him to the horsepond, to the smithy, or to the baiting-place on the high road ; we accompany him when he drives to town to bring his fruit and vegetables to market or to the strand to buy fish ; we find him in the horse market, among numerous Walloon stallions, and see him in his Sunday-best at the Dutch equestrian games and the cruel "Chasing the Cat."

All such motives and many other similar ones are most variously presented by the artist ; numerous details are introduced as if by chance, and yet they contribute to the general effect, and to the novelistic charm in the most manifold way. Dozens of figures, often a hundred and more, executed in the wildest movement and in the smallest space, form, as if of their own accord, full and harmonious compositions. No other artist of the Dutch or the Flemish School, with the single exception of Rubens, has designed and disposed his paintings with the



same imagination and artistic freedom ; few artists are such good draughtsmen, possess such delicate feeling and such memory for form and movement ; the artist's manner of treatment heightens the plastic effect, and is at the same time exceedingly effective pictorially.

With his feeling for tone and air perspective Wouwermans also unites a talent for colour. His colours are at first rich and vigorous with a brownish general tone (hence his predilection for evening light at this time), but gradually he comes to a richer silver-clear daylight. It is only in his later years that he invariably made his pictures too dark, the colour-combination becomes inharmonious and almost incorrect. This impression is strengthened by the darkening and coming through of the shadows. His unusual facility of production led to the adoption of a careless, slovenly manner of painting. As a feeling for colour is not his strongest artistic quality—just as with Jan Steen, who is related to him in many ways—it has come about that recently he has lost in favour with the art-loving public, as well as with collectors. Every one who has a gallery will indeed have the wish to possess one or two of his early, bright masterpieces, though the richest people would never dream now of filling entire rooms with his paintings, as the great collectors did in the eighteenth and part of the nineteenth centuries. But even when we openly acknowledge the artist's weak points, particularly in his later pictures, he still retains his place among the first Dutch artists.

Our master's development can be easily followed in the extraordinarily large number of his pictures preserved to us. We have indeed no dates as a guide—for they are



almost entirely wanting on his pictures—but the form of his monogram, which he frequently altered in his last period, is something to go by. In the earliest works Rembrandt's influence—handed on by his Haarlem pupil Jacob de Wet—is apparent and particularly pronounced in a cavalry skirmish in a mountainous landscape of the Stephan Michel Collection in Mainz. Together with this, the simple motives and manner of composition, the sturdy breed of horses, the monotonous brownish tone, reveal more or less strongly the example of Pieter de Laer, who had just returned to Haarlem when Wouwermans was received into the guild there as a master (1639). Occasionally the younger master approaches the older one so nearly in such pictures that we mistake one painter for the other; this is particularly the case in the "Feeding the Poor before the Cloister" in the Thieme Collection at Leipzig, which appears to be copied from a composition of Pieter de Laer's, but is much warmer in tone and lightly and sketchily treated. In connection with this affinity of the two artists Houbraken tells a long and disagreeable story containing most malicious insinuations; happily we find few other such stories in his book. With much circumstantiality and mentioning the name of his authority he tells us that Wouwermans made use of the older artist's pictures, copied them, and by so doing injured and wounded honest Pieter de Laer so deeply that the latter in a fit of melancholy committed suicide. As soon as Wouwermans heard of his death he obtained possession of the artist's drawings and sketches, and with their help produced later on his numerous and famous compositions, without anyone having an idea of

what he had done. This is the Houbraken who makes the artist die five years before Pieter de Laer, and informs us of the latter that he "preferred to make his studies in his head rather than on paper!" If he had only looked attentively at some of Wouwermans' pictures he would have convinced himself how different—with the exception of a few youthful works—they are from all Pieter de Laer's paintings; he would then have been obliged to acknowledge that one single composition by the younger master contains almost as many motives as all honest Pieter's pictures together.

The youthful works were painted in the forties. To the end of this period belongs a series of nearly related pictures; they are invariably of very modest size, and the figures in them are so subordinated and small that these works can be regarded as pure landscapes. The National Gallery, the Hermitage, the Schwerin Gallery, the Huldshinsky Collection and the Emperor Frederick Museum in Berlin possess important works of this kind. The choice of the high point of view, the rich formation of the country, and the view into the distance, the hazy silver-gray daylight, and the grand forms of the clouds and the shadows they cast upon the landscape, as well as the light and masterly treatment and the introduction of a few small figures and animals which enrich the composition by their vigorous colouring—all this gives a charm to these pictures which entitles them to a place among the best paintings of the professed landscapists.

The great number of Wouwermans' paintings belong to the fifties, probably also to the beginning of the sixties. They are distinguished by wealth of motive, rich imagina-

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tion, skilful arrangement and *mise-en-scène*, the narration is lively, the colouring bright and clear and dominated by a cool air-tone. Occasionally the colouring of these pictures has a great charm and the piquant lighting renders them very effective. Gustave Rothschild's Collection in Paris contains a picture of this kind; a troop of gaily-dressed riders halts by some standing water, in which the clear, massive cloud of an approaching thunderstorm is reflected. A similar effect is achieved in a winter picture of the R. Kann Collection. In many pictures of this period the overcrowding of figures and motives is disturbing, and this fault is still more apparent in the paintings of the last years, in which the colour-harmony has lost its even balance in consequence of the darkening and coming through of the Bolus ground. Such pictures are particularly numerous in the public collections, and by crowding them together in one or several cabinets, as is occasionally done here as well as in Dresden and Petersburg, the unfavourable impression is intensified, and the spectator's eye becomes dulled to the manifold charms of Wouwermans' pictures.



## DUTCH STILL-LIFE

WHEN the art of "Still-Life" is spoken of we are wont to think first of the numerous painters who practised this art in the most manifold way in Holland during the seventeenth century. But the presentments we include under this name appeared much earlier in art. The ancients knew them, and with great feeling for style employed them for decorative painting and particularly for mosaic. At the time of the Renaissance still-life was treated with particular skill; not in great art, indeed, there we see it as seldom as in ancient times, but in decoration. In architecture, particularly in panels, friezes, pilasters, &c., we not infrequently find combinations of a still-life nature. But it was the intarsia artists who made use of this motive in the richest and most piquant way; they also introduced the architectural picture and the pure landscape into Italian art. Still-life painting of the seventeenth century has no connection or affinity with these conventional, decorative presentments; it has no ulterior purpose, it is intended to produce the effect of a picture. The true home of this art is in the Netherlands; the few contemporary painters in Italy and Spain, whose work showed the same tendency, are all followers of the Dutch masters and more or less dependent upon them.



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In Holland as well as in the Spanish Netherlands this peculiar branch of art flourished during the whole of the seventeenth and nearly to the middle of the eighteenth century. Hardly another province of painting can produce a like number of artists. A great number of them were known to us already by name and by their work, but at nearly every exhibition of old paintings and at numerous sales, particularly in Holland and Germany, we met, till a short time ago, hitherto unknown still-life painters, whose names Houbraken and active modern documental research had handed over to us as empty ideas; even the documents relating to some of them had first to be brought to light. With the gradual advance in the scientific arrangement of the many small galleries in Germany, and partly too of those in France, signatures of artists have been discovered upon numerous pictures—till now attributed to J. de Heem, Claes Heda, Frans Snyder, and other well-known masters—who were known to us neither by name nor by their work.

Delight in the artistic presentment of inanimate Nature has its origin in the pleasure the people of the Netherlands took in representing everything pictorially which the visible world offers. Dutch horticulture and the fondness of the people for flowers, which has almost become a proverb, is another indication of their interest in still-life. The display upon the tables of the military guilds, and on the sideboards of the state-rooms, which the pictures of a B. van Bassen and D. van Delen bring before us, testify to their love for magnificent vessels of gold and silver, copper and pewter. The collections of curiosities

and art first appeared in the Netherlands, where we meet them at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

The great number of artists who, in the most diverse parts of Holland, devoted themselves to the presentment of still-life, corresponds to the great variety and astonishing many-sidedness of this branch of art. Still-life in Holland—under this term we include, in the widest sense of the word, flower-painting and the delineation of dead animals—comes into existence with the severance of Dutch art from the old Netherland art. In the first epoch of its development, which together with its branches extends to about the middle of the seventeenth century, the local currents manifest themselves particularly strongly and are indeed characteristic of these periods. From the motives of the works of this time we can generally say with some certainty whether this or that still-life has been painted by a Haarlem or a Leyden master, by one from Amsterdam or from the Hague; or, if we cannot do this, we can tell whether it was executed while the artist was living at one of these places. This variety in motive, and partly too in conception and treatment, permits us to draw interesting conclusions about the character of these towns which, although only covering an area of a few miles, appear peculiarly shut off from one another in the first decades of the century. The painters of the rich old patrician town of Haarlem delight by the remembrance of the pleasures of the table. Sometimes they represent the luxurious table of the rich with the most beautiful silver cups and Venetian glass, sometimes the frugal meal of the poor whose appetite is certainly no less stimulated by the sight of a can of

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beer, some oysters, some cheese, and the chance of a pipe of tobacco, than is the rich young man's fastidious taste by the peacock pasties and the glasses of champagne. Other Haarlem artists choose for the subjects of their pictures magnificent plate from the goldsmiths' studios, from a Vian and Lütma. In contrast to Lucullan Haarlem, the neighbouring town of Leyden presents itself with dignity and authority as the old university town and the seat of orthodox theology. The still-life presentments of the Leyden painters are pictorial arrangements of books bound in pig-skin, of writing materials, of notes and musical instruments; along with this is a glass of weak beer and a clay pipe, announcing an enjoyment which even the most starched scholar may permit himself. A death's head is not forgotten, there is also an hour-glass and a lamp as symbols of the transitoriness of all earthly learning and enjoyment. At the Hague it is not the court of the prince, but the famous Scheveningen fish-market which influences the painters in the choice of their subjects. At Utrecht, again, refugees of the Reformed Faith from the Spanish Netherlands cultivate a species of flower-and-fruit-painting of gorgeous colour, and we soon find Jan de Heem distinguishing himself as the most important master in this branch of art. In Amsterdam still-life painting only gained footing when Rembrandt's appearance called forth a new, and the most brilliant, phase of Dutch painting, and when, too, the riches of the metropolis attracted artists from all the neighbouring States. The many-sided and grand development of still-life was therefore materially determined by artistic points of view which also principally influenced the choice of the



subject. The hundred and more painters who applied themselves to this form of art are as different in their pictorial conception and treatment of still-life as their subjects are varied. Even if the presentment imposed certain restrictions, if the pictures of fish and silver vessels suggested light and cool painting, bouquets of flowers rich and vigorous colours, if the "Vanitas" presentments required a monochrome treatment, we may yet observe innumerable, delicate variations—also in the pictorial treatment—according to the time and place, to the talent and training. A Gillig or Putter paints fish almost without colour and cool in tone; a A. van Beijeren makes a luminous, brilliant piece of colour of the same subject; a Heda paints his breakfasts in a cool light and with little local colour; a Kalf or Claeuw with most gorgeous colouring and charming chiarascuro; while A. J. D. de Heem paints sweepingly and delicately, A. van Beijeren lays on his colours as thickly and boldly as a modern Impressionist. It is the simplicity of the subject which makes the artists inventive in their choice and cultivation of every artistic means.

With specialists, as still-life painters are, we must not expect to find greater many-sidedness and a richer development in the individual artist. This is only to be observed with the most important and the most influential masters. It is therefore only worth our while to consider them closely, in so far as their development is typical and of importance for this whole branch of art.



## JAN DAVIDSZ DE HEEM

AMONG the still-life painters Jan Davidsz de Heem has always been the best-known and most thought of. For the development of this Utrecht artist, and for the range of his work, it was of importance that he frequently changed his place of residence, and particularly that he moved to Antwerp at a time when still susceptible to outside influence. In the year 1635 the master, who was then scarcely thirty, was received into the guild of this town and remained there for thirty-two years. In 1667 he returned to his native town of Utrecht, but in 1672 moved back to Antwerp, where he died at the end of the year 1683, or in the first months of the following year. De Heem, therefore, spent half of his long life in Antwerp ; it was there he produced most of his work, and the historians of the Antwerp school of painting claim the artist as a Flemish master. Great as was the influence which the art of this town, particularly that of Jan Brueghel and Daniel Seghers, exercised upon him, it is quite as certain that De Heem was a finished artist when he left Holland. He therefore never quite denied his Dutch character in Antwerp, and before he moved there he had passed through a rich and varied development.

The artist's youthful works, painted at Utrecht in the middle of the twenties, are principally in small German

galleries and private collections, and are little thought of. They are simple fruit-pieces in the manner of the older Utrecht painters, Bartholomew Asteyn, B. van der Ast and Bosschaert. The tone is brownish, they are almost timidly executed, but solid in colouring. It is still-life with some fruit which appears to have been emptied into a Chinese dish or on to a plate. There are examples of these fruit-dishes dating from the years 1624 till about 1626 in the Schubart Collection in Munich (sold at a sale), in the Oeder Collection in Düsseldorf, and in the Glitza Collection in Hamburg. In the following years, during a longer stay in Leyden, the artist became a follower of the peculiar art movement of the older Leyden still-life painters, as several pictures of a "Vanitas" show; one is in a public collection in the Gotha Gallery. In this group of pictures, which are all of small size, a distinct development is observable with regard to more skilful arrangement; the treatment is more pictorial, and particularly the tone and chiaroscuro are more delicately finished. Apparently young Rembrandt's influence determined this progress. At that time he assembled his first pupils about him in Leyden, and occasionally painted a Vanitas himself, as they did, or at least he touched one up.

Young De Heem's migration to Antwerp in 1634-1635 was again of deep importance for the artist. But we feel how much he remained a Dutchman when we compare his pictures with those of D. Seghers. De Heem's flower-pieces and baskets of fruit are also of the richest colouring; but instead of Seghers's cold daylight and clear local colours a pronounced chiaroscuro dominates, and this blends the most different colours to a warm tone. Instead of Seghers's

thin laying on of colour and decorative treatment, which reveal Rubens's influence, we find with De Heem that genuinely Dutch, loving interest for nature, for the peculiarity of every plant and every fruit, for form and appearance, and the most sedulous rendering of the impressions won. In any case, the Flemish School may be proud that this most famous of all Dutch still-life painters fully developed his individuality in Antwerp and under the influence of the older Flemish artists. With his susceptibility to outward impressions, this residence and the use he made on his occasional visits home of the experience gained were of great importance, not only for the happy development of his own talent, but at the same time for this whole branch of painting in Holland and partly, too, in the Spanish Netherlands. This helps to explain the striking affinity of Dutch and Flemish still-life about the middle of the seventeenth century.

## WILLEM KALF

JAN DE HEEM's pictures were greatly admired in their time, and since then have been equally esteemed. This is owing to the remarkable taste shown in their arrangement and in the disposition of the flowers and fruit, to their rich and yet toned colouring, to the fidelity and subtlety of their rendering, and to the clear, transparent, wonderfully shaded way of painting, which scarcely ever appears smooth or glassy though the laying-on of the colours is quite imperceptible. The modern Impressionist art movement has no longer any real pleasure in this neatness and perfection of drawing and execution. Nearer to our feeling is an artist who, developing under Rembrandt's influence, achieved in his still-life an effect similar to that of the patriarch of Dutch art, by means of the vigour and warmth of the colours and by his chiaroscuro. This artist is Willem Kalf.

Kalf was a native of Amsterdam. He was born there in the year 1621 or 1622, and from the beginning of the forties we have dated pictures of his. If Hendrick Pot, the Haarlem genre- and portrait-painter, was really his master, as is thought from what Houbraken says,<sup>1</sup> it is

<sup>1</sup> It is supposed, from this statement of Houbraken's, that H. Pot moved to Amsterdam in 1648; as if Kalf could not just as well have gone to Haarlem to be his apprentice. In the year 1648, too, he had been a master for at least six years.



strange that Kalf's earliest paintings show no affinity of any kind—either in motive or in manner of painting—to this artist. These youthful works (besides some small landscapes in the manner of J. van Goyen) are large still-life pieces which are nearly related, and at least of equal value to the "Breakfasts" of J. J. Treck, Heda, P. Claesz, young Frans Hals, and whatever their names may be. So far as they are dated they were painted in the years 1642 till 1644 (in the Stædel Institution at Frankfort, in the Rouen Gallery, in Warwick Castle, in the possession of Herr J. Simon in Berlin, and in other places), and show some dishes of a simple meal upon a breakfast-table; by the side are all kinds of magnificent jugs and drinking-vessels of pewter, silver, or silver-gilt. The local colouring almost disappears; the construction approaches most nearly that of J. J. Treck, Kalf's older countryman. The cool grey-brown tone and the chiaroscuro are evidently to be accounted for by the influence of Rembrandt's paintings from the end of the thirties and beginning of the forties, which are characterised by the similar, almost monochrome tone, though it is, indeed, much warmer. Some small still-life pictures with frugal breakfasts are painted in the same toned manner, and from the motive appear to belong to the same period; for instance, some oysters, nuts, and a glass of Rhine wine in L. Knaus's Collection in Berlin; and a wine-glass, together with a Raeren tankard bearing the arms of Amsterdam, and a clay pipe and brazier at the side belonging to the Prince of Hesse in the Castle of Friedrichskron. These pictures are in the manner of P. Claesz and Heda, but of still more delicate pictorial effect.



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Rembrandt's example remains decisive for Kalf. Under the influence of the master's paintings of lustrous colour from the second half of the forties and the fifties, Kalf fully develops his individuality and displays such glowing and glorious colour, such a delicate mysterious chiaroscuro and pictorial treatment of material in the genuine Rembrandt manner, that he may, in the widest sense, be reckoned to his school. There are two very different kinds of still-life which the artist now paints. At one time small pictures with a view into a gloomy corner of the kitchen or store-room, occasionally of the courtyard, where crockery, vegetables, and kitchen stores of all sorts are heaped up in picturesque disorder. These pictures, which are of quite small size, are to be found singly in public and private collections; two in the Louvre, two in the Mannheim Gallery, two particularly small ones in the Hermitage; Boymans Museum at Rotterdam, and the Metropolitan Museum in New York, the Berlin Museum, the Schwerin Gallery, the Michel Collection at Mayence, each possesses one; Dr. Bredius at the Hague has a particularly beautiful one. Two of these pictures, in the Strassburg and Aachen Galleries, have picturesque corners out of doors by a well, and there are occasionally figures in the dark backgrounds. These little pictures have something strikingly modern in their design and arrangement, in the pictorial treatment and colour effect. They remind us of artists like Decamps, and yet they are altogether characteristic of their period and have their companion pieces in the works of young Frans Hals, G. Dou, P. van den Bosch, and others. When we observe how effectively the green and yellow gourds contrast with some raw meat, and this with a blue jug



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or cloth, with brass vessels and copper kettles, and how delicately toned this vigorous colour-effect is by the chiaroscuro, we understand how such a small picture, which was in the possession of the painter François Boucher, fetched the price of 600 francs at a sale in the eighteenth century.

A peculiar contrast to these small presentments of untidy and dirty kitchen corners are the magnificent breakfast-tables which were painted at the same time and in greater number. If, in the former, we see the preparations for the poor man's meal, in the latter there is the dessert for the spoilt palates of the rich Amsterdam Mynheers; and while the former pictures are fugitive, pictorial impressions, the latter are composed and executed with the most subtle taste. Upon a coloured marble slab, or a table covered with a Persian carpet, stands a blue-white Chinese porcelain dish of lemons and oranges, or a pomegranate cut in half; close by we see a silver jug, a green wine-glass filled with Rhine wine on a high silver stand, a silver centre-piece or drinking-cup in the shape of a shell, a nautilus goblet or a little silver dish, a tall Venetian glass of claret, a beautiful Chinese porcelain vessel, the colours brought out with lacquer; at the side, perhaps, a dainty little enamelled clock and some orange blossoms, so that the sense of smell may participate in these subtle enjoyments as well as palate and eye. These are the materials, of which, in the most varied combinations, Kalf constructs his still-life pieces. They stand out gorgeously and brilliantly against the dark ground like a bouquet of the most beautiful flowers. No other still-life painter comes anywhere near Willem Kalf in the charm of his colour com-



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binations, in the pictorial and at the same time delicate treatment of the objects represented. Sometimes it is a Chinese porcelain vessel, sometimes an iridescent, polished shell-shaped goblet, a gold drinking-cup, or a chased silver vessel which strikes the keynote in this colour-concert, and all the other colours are tuned in harmony.

Kalf was esteemed as an artist during his lifetime. He was considered unusually cultured and a judge of art, and his pictures, probably on account of their subtle execution and gorgeous colour were equally liked by Amsterdam burghers and foreign art-loving potentates. The Great Elector seems to have had a high opinion of him as he consulted him when buying pictures in Amsterdam. He also acquired a number of his pictures which are for the most part still in the royal castles. On the other hand, in the nineteenth century, the artist was for a long time strangely neglected. Till a short time ago the great public collections had no pictures of his, and many have none now. From their stores the provincial collections were formerly furnished with the artist's paintings, so that the gallery in Le Mans now possesses his most magnificent and largest picture. Only quite lately has Kalf again become fully known and universally appreciated. Among public galleries Berlin has five particularly beautiful paintings from his hand; a number of his most important pictures are now in German private collections: in Berlin in the B. Richter, O. Huldshinsky, L. Knaus, J. Simon Collections; at Leipzig, in the Thieme Gallery; at the Hague (1656), in the possession of Herr Ch. van de Poll, and in other places.

Willem Kalf's paintings offer another special interest



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for Dutch art by the gold and silver work occurring in most of them. These vessels and utensils, with the exception of some few older pieces which keep to the style of the later Renaissance, have a peculiar Baroque character, specially characteristic of Holland and of the work of Rembrandt's well-known friend, the goldsmith Jan Lutma of Amsterdam. While in Germany, and partly too in the Netherlands at the same period, the scrolls and the ribbon and roll-work of the late Renaissance were apt to merge into a tasteless convolution of pigs' ears and fish heads, the Amsterdam arts and crafts, about the middle of the seventeenth century, formed out of it a peculiarly charming decoration, which in shape and feeling had much in common with the Rococo, and in its pictorial vagueness was particularly suited to the treatment of metal. Altogether the knowledge of this epoch of the Dutch goldsmith's art and of Dutch arts and crafts could scarcely be better promoted than by having the silver vessels copied from the paintings of Willem Kalf, Pieter Roestraeten (who later, in England took English silver work as his model), the two Van Streeks and others. Then only would the peculiar elements which, in the solitary examples preserved to us, make a vague, fantastically pictorial impression, be more clearly recognised. In studying this art Rembrandt's works must not be forgotten. On account of their quite indefinite, purely pictorial rendering of form they are perhaps thought of last. Some of the magnificent furniture and vessels in his paintings, the gold-embroidered borders of his State robes, some drawings of frames for his pictures exhibit the same style of decoration as the silver-work of old Lutma and the ornament engravings of his son and of G. van den Eeckhout

(compare page 18). There is probably no doubt of this style having exercised a certain influence upon Rembrandt's ornamental work ; but it is as probable that Rembrandt's fertile imagination with its power of creating fantastic, imaginary shapes also gave considerable stimulus in this direction.

## ABRAHAM VAN BEIJEREN

By the side of Willem Kalf there is an artist scarcely noticed by his contemporaries, who often nearly approaches him and who has only attained to recognition in our time. His name is Abraham van Beijeren, he is the same age as Kalf, and like him is far more versatile than the other Dutch still-life painters. He was born at the Hague, and practised his art there for a considerable time, frequently changed his place of residence but was everywhere tormented by creditors, although he was industrious and painted quickly. Then for two centuries he was as good as forgotten. The few pictures in public collections which bear his monogram were given names from the monogram dictionary, such as A. van Borssum, A. van Becke, and so on. The colouristic direction of modern art in the seventies of the last century has gradually brought van Beijeren into notice again. It was the artists who first appreciated his pictures of fish and still-life and began to collect them.

Abraham van Beijeren was a brother-in-law of the Hague fish painter, Pieter de Putter, who was twenty years his senior. It is therefore, not improbable that Van Beijeren was his pupil, and perfected himself first as a painter of fish; his fish-pieces appear to belong to his earlier period. A leading picture of this kind in the Berlin Gallery bears the date 1655, as well as the full name.

Generally speaking we very rarely find dates on the artist's pictures.<sup>1</sup> But the gray tone and the thin dashing manner of painting lead to the conclusion that these pictures were painted at the end of the forties and in the fifties. From the same period are probably those marine-pieces which have only become known again quite lately. We may conclude they are his by their bearing—as far as they are signed—the same monogram as his fish- and still-life pieces; in some of his pictures of fish he has brought in views of the beach and the sea which have the same character as his marine pieces. To judge from their rich colouring and treatment, we may attribute his various pictures of still-life, breakfast-tables as well as flower-and-fruit arrangements, to the artist's middle and later period. The date of his death we do not yet know, we are only able to trace him till 1675.

A. van Beijeren is equally skilful with all his subjects, even if his treatment is not always equally masterly. His sea-pieces, about a dozen of which are known to us (in public galleries, we find them in the Boymans Museum at Rotterdam, in the Municipal Museum at the Hague, in the Düsseldorf Gallery, in the Kaiser Friedrich Museum at Magdeburg, and two in the Budapest Gallery), stand midway between the marine-pieces of Goyen and E. van Everdingen. They always present a disturbed sea with movement in the air above; the water is painted in a light, warm gray tone,

<sup>1</sup> Some time ago I saw in the market in Paris a characteristic fish-piece, coarsely painted and yet simply composed and of vigorous colouring. It was distinctly signed A. Beijeren, 1634. It is impossible to reconcile this date with that of the artist's birth (1620); the three is probably a slip of the pen and intended for five. The Academy in Vienna possesses a fish-stall with a saleswoman at the side, dated 1666.



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the treatment is broad, sometimes even sweeping, the dark ground shines through the shadows. These pictures have an essentially decorative effect, but the observation of nature is always true and independent. The artist is still more remarkable in his still-life. We are not impressed by particular originality of motive or conception, but yet the artist knows how to stamp the most different presentments with his individuality. They are toned and yet full of colour. In a warm brownish tone with delicate chiaroscuro, he allows single colours to come out strongly, particularly a vigorous red. Among his shiny, greenish-gray fish—haddock, flounders, tench, &c.—there are always some slices of salmon, a boiled lobster, or some crabs. The lobster plays a similar part in his breakfasts; or in its place there is a boiled ham, a Chinese dish of oranges, pomegranates and the like. A plush tablecloth of cool dark-violet colour, magnificent silver vessels in which the surroundings are reflected (occasionally we see the reflection of the artist sitting at his easel), shell-shaped goblets, grapes and fruit of all kinds, tumblers, and green glasses filled with Rhine wine unite in the most varied combinations to form a colour-picture which is as harmonious and magnificent as it is toned. The collections of the late R. Kann in Paris, of C. von Hollitscher and of Oscar Huldshinsky in Berlin, contain splendid pictures of such subjects. Of rich colour, and with a keynote of red, are some pictures with displays of meat, lights, and so on by the side of a dead fowl, a brass vessel, and vegetables, as the still-life pieces in the castle of Friedrichcron, and in the former Schubart Collection in Munich. The same may be said of a few flower-pieces, as the splendid bouquet of roses in the

Rijksmuseum at Amsterdam, the gay bunch of wild flowers in the Mauritshuis at the Hague, and the large garland of flowers in the above-mentioned picture of the Huldchinsky Collection.

It is rare that the tone of such a picture is light and cool; when this is the case the effect is almost more harmonious and decorative. On the other hand these "Breakfast-Tables," as well as the "Fish-Stalls" and "Fruit-Pieces" occasionally suffer from overcrowding and overloading with the different objects. The artist's full mastery therefore comes out better in certain small pictures of simpler composition in which we generally find a green wine-glass filled with golden liquid and a long-stemmed glass of claret placed by the side of a silver plate of oysters and a lemon, or a Chinese dish of oranges and peaches, some nuts, and so on. There are particularly beautiful examples of such pictures in private possession in Berlin, in the collections of M. Kappel, H. Frenkel, and B. Richter as well as in the Schwerin Museum. They all vie with similar compositions by Kalf. A work showing great individuality is a small breakfast with shellfish in the Lippmann-Lissingen Collection in Vienna, a masterpiece in black-and-white, in which some crabs and a green wine-glass at the side give the note of colour. These smaller works are not so brilliant, are more toned, darker, and warmer, but of wondrous charm in the harmony and in the flowing, pictorial rendering of the things presented. In their way they rank with the masterpieces of the best Dutch painters.

## ADRIAEN BROUWER

THE name of Adriaen Brouwer summons up before us a kaleidoscopic picture of many and varied recollections: delineations of the life of the Low Dutch people, delicately humorous, of the highest artistic perfection, and inseparably connected in our memory with the Brouwer Cabinet in Munich, are mixed up with the jests and mad tricks which have made the artist the favourite of the old biographers. An Adonis in rags, a philosopher under the fool's cap, an Epicurean with cynical manners, a Communist of a peculiar kind who put his means at the disposal of every one who would make merry with him, Brouwer, as a man, was a true Proteus, and as an artist he was no less versatile, no less original and reckless. Every inch an artist he was a genius who deserves to be mentioned in the same breath with the greatest painters, but was dominated by an irrepressible inclination to an adventurous life. He appears suddenly, nobody knows where he has come from, and disappears as unexpectedly, nobody knows where he has gone. He begins life by running away from his parents when almost a boy; scarcely arrived at manhood he is carried off just as suddenly and violently: death overtakes him in some tavern and his body is thrown into a hole together with the corpses of beggars. The more research tells us of his life, the more interesting does





ADRIAEN BROUWER  
THE BARBER'S SHOP  
MUNICH





the character of the man appear; the better we become acquainted with his work, the farther we penetrate into it, the more attractive becomes the picture of the artist.

There is great danger with Brouwer of allowing his picture to be seen in the light of modern ideas. The period of the good, solid middle-class attempted his "vindication," and with utter disregard of the old biographers who relate his extravagances and mad tricks, made an honest drawing-room hero of him and one of the associates of the painter-prince, Rubens. On the other hand our most modern Bohemian literature is inclined to present him as a vagrant after the manner of the heroes of the latest Russian novels. With the help of the documents and his work, let us try to obtain a simple and faithful picture of the man and artist.

According to Houbraken, whose book appeared in 1718, Adriaen was a Dutchman, was born at Haarlem, served his apprenticeship with Hals, ran away at last as his master took advantage of him, went to Amsterdam, and, thanks to his friend Van Zomerén, quickly became known there. We shall see that the biographer follows good old tradition with regard to the artist's apprenticeship and his stay in Holland; but what he relates besides is almost entirely borrowed from the older Flemish writers. When he does not quote them he refers to a manuscript which Nicolaus Six, a pupil of Karel de Moor's, therefore a younger contemporary of Houbraken's, is stated to have found among his ancestors' papers and to have placed at the biographer's disposal. Comparison with the documents will show us what we have to think of the authenticity of this manuscript.

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A. van Dyck's iconography, published in 1645, gives the earliest printed information about the artist in the signature under his well-known portrait engraved by Brouwer's friend Schelte a Bolswert. The words in the rare first impression are : ADRIANUS BRAUWER GRYLLORUM PICTOR ANTVERPIAE; the second impression adds : NATIONE FLANDER.

Brouwer's oldest biographer is his younger countryman, Cornelis de Bie, born in 1627. In his "Gulden Cabinet" (of 1661) he repeatedly calls the artist "uyt Vlaenderen" and "gheboren in Vlaenderen." But he tells us nothing of his life, nothing of the time and place of his birth or his death, of the names of his teachers or any other details at all respecting him. In Antwerp, where among his fellow-citizens, particularly among the painters, a number of his acquaintances and friends were still living, people were so full of the young artist-philosopher, of his pessimistic humour, his mad ideas, and his wild life, that when he was spoken of it was not his parentage nor his teachers, nor his position in the community that was discussed, but his originality, his humorous tricks or his art. De Bie has given expression to the public opinion of Antwerp—where the artist is still said to live in the mouth of the people—in his verses in which he draws a fascinating and faithful picture of Brouwer's character and life as well as of his art. Of these verses we shall speak later. With much relish De Bie recounts his jests, the "geestigte aventuren," by which "syn leven noch langh inde ghedachtnis sal blijven." "Robbed at sea by the enemy and escaping to Amsterdam with bare life, Brouwer, knowing no other way of earning a living,

took his palette in hand, and was so skilful that he soon made money. He bought coarse linen, from which he had a fashionable costume made, and on this he painted a splendid pattern of flowers. Everybody admired the young dandy in his rich and fashionable dress, and the young ladies of Amsterdam ransacked the shops for the same costly material. When Brouwer was in the theatre one evening, he jumped on to the stage at the conclusion of the piece in the clothes which were known to all the town, took a wet cloth in either hand with which he washed off the gaudy pattern and stood there in his suit of colourless canvas, a living sermon upon the vanity and folly of all human ways and doings."

Another contemporary, Izaak Bullart, who lived in Brussels and probably knew Brouwer, gives us a rather more detailed account of him than de Bie. Bullart confirms Adriaen's Flemish origin with the exact statement: "natif d'Audenarde." He also informs us of the artist's death, where it happened and how old he then was: "il mourut à Anvers âgé de trente-deux ans seulement, consommé de débauches, et si pauvre qu'il fallut mendier l'assistance des personnes charitables pour fournir aux frais de son enterrement. Il fut inhumé dans l'ambulacre des P.P. Carmes d'Anvers; d'où il a esté depuis transporté dans leur Eglise; non pour ses vertus, mais à cause de la grande réputation qu'il a remporté par son pinceau." Bullart goes on to relate that after a longer stay in Holland ("ayant demeuré quelque temps en Hollande) the artist came to Antwerp, and that there "éstant allé promener au Chasteau vétu à la Hollandoise il y fut retenu prisonnier; mais bientôt après relaché, lorsqu'on



reconnut son innocence et son enjouement." To Brouwer's adventure in the theatre at Amsterdam which Bullart apparently takes from De Bie, he adds quite a similar story: "The artist's relations were horrified at the untidy and often torn clothes he went about in. For the wedding of one of his nephews in Antwerp Brouwer had a handsome and fashionable suit made in which he appeared at the ceremony. When the company at the wedding dinner expressed their admiration of the splendid costume the artist suddenly seized a meat dish in each hand and shook the greasy gravy over himself; then declaring that it was not he who had been asked to the wedding but his clothes he threw them into the fire and hastened away from the table to his real friends—in the tavern."

About the same time as Bullart a German contemporary of the artist's, Joachim von Sandrart, who is indeed not always reliable, but who came in contact with Brouwer's friends while staying in the Netherlands, wrote down some short notes about him (1675). He, too, says that Brouwer was a Fleming by birth and character. "His lively nature which inclined him to joking and jesting in the manner of the cynic, Diogenes, made him popular with everybody."

Let us now hear what the documents say to see how far they confirm, complete or contradict the biographers' statements.

In consequence of Bullart's communication, according to which the artist was born in Oudenaarde, as well as Houbraken's, who opposes to this statement the authority of that ostensible Six manuscript, the registers of birth and other Church books have been searched in both places

but without any result. Herr H. Rapsaet, who undertook the investigation of the Oudenaarde documents, publishes on this occasion information for which there is unhappily no documental evidence. It rests upon a communication made to him by his grandfather, and I quote it here literally: "Quant au peintre Adriaen de Brouwere, j'ai vu, avant la révolution et du temps que j'étais secrétaire du collège des chefstuteurs de la ville d'Audenarde, l'état des biens ou inventaire après décès du père d'Adriaen de Brauwere; il était peintre de patrons pour les maîtres tapissiers et mourut en état de déconfiture. Les tuteurs des ses enfants renoncèrent à sa succession; son fils, le peintre alors âgé seulement de seize ans, avait déjà abandonné la maison paternelle, sans que l'on sût ou il s'était retiré." There is a certain air of probability about this report, although, written down from memory, it has not the value of the most insignificant document. We only come across papers containing information about the artist in Holland from the year 1625, and in Antwerp still later. In this town, Brouwer is frequently mentioned from the end of 1631, so that we are justified in supposing that he stayed there without interruption from the winter of 1631-32 till his death at the end of January 1638. Unhappily it was not the custom in Antwerp in entering the name of a person in legal, judicial or Church documents to give the parentage, age or rank; therefore the records do not contain the slightest hint about his previous life, his age, his extraction, or about his parents. The documents found quite lately in Haarlem and Amsterdam also give no information at all on this point.

Adriaen Brouwer is entered as a master in the "Liggeren" of the Lucas Guild of Antwerp, in the winter of 1631-32. He pays the full entrance fee of twenty-six florins. Almost at the same time he announces a pupil, a boy scarcely fourteen, the son of a friend of whom we shall hear more later. Some documents from this period furnish the proof of the reputation the artist already had in Antwerp. They state that at the beginning of the year 1632 David Ryckaert II. sold a copy after Brouwer, representing a bowling-green. A second, almost contemporary, document mentions Brouwer in connection with the greatest master of Antwerp, with P. P. Rubens. On March 4, 1632, "Signor Adriaen Brouwer, constschilder residerende binnen dese stadt Antwerpen" at the request of Daniel Deegbroot, the captain of the civic guard, affirms in lieu of oath before the notary Peeter de Breuseghem, and in the presence of Rubens, that he has only painted once a "Peasants' Dance," the original of which has been in the possession of Herr Peter Pauwel Rubens for about a year. At the same time he attests that a little picture shown him by the Antwerp merchant, Jacomo de Cachiopin, is an early work from his hand.

Though we see from the above how sought after Brouwer's paintings were at that time, and though the prices paid for them were unusually high, yet the following document from the summer of the same year yields the striking proof of how little he could call his own and how deeply he was in debt. It is an inventory drawn up—at the application of a creditor whose name is not mentioned—by Frans Marcelis, the notary of the painter Craesbeeck, of the "meubelen competeren Signor Adriaen de Brouwer."



This detailed list, which does not leave out the smallest brush, gives us an interesting glimpse of the artist's home, acquaints us with his way of living and his character. The poorest art-student of to-day would feel like a prince if he could compare his belongings with those of the artist for whose pictures already at that time the first connoisseurs and collectors of Antwerp were contending and paying enormous prices. Of furniture: "een spiegeltken"; of clothes: a pair of trowsers, a short black taffeta coat, a coat with silver trimming and a black cloth mantle; also a belt with a dagger, three black caps, two hats and two pair of sleeves. He was particularly badly off for linen: one collar, five cuffs and—no shirt! His painting utensils too were scanty: a glass of colours, some dozen brushes, brush handles, but also a "wooden lay-figure, together with a stand." The few works of art he possessed were certainly the gifts of friends, or he obtained them by exchange: two small landscapes in a black frame by Momper, two gray pictures painted by Joos van Cleef, a small picture on a marble slab by J. Fouquier, a picture of the Emperor Theodosius, "noch een stucxken wesende eenen Kayser sittende in sijne Majesteyt," lastly twelve engravings.

Conspicuous in these poor surroundings are "eight books," a number that was sufficient at that time to justify the name of a library; even wealthy artists often possessed no more printed works. But we are particularly astonished to find a map of the siege of Breda. What had this Diogenes among the artists to do with the siege of Breda, what had he to do with politics and public affairs at all? This question forces itself upon us repeatedly,



especially in connection with one of the next documents, which treats of Brouwer's life. On February 23, 1633, he signed a deed "op den Castele van Antwerpen." At that time he was a State prisoner and seven months later he was not yet released ! That he was not arrested for debt is—from van den Branden's statement—beyond all doubt ; for prisoners for debt were without exception confined in Antwerp in the town prison "het Steen," while only State prisoners were brought to the fortress, the seat of the Spanish garrison. Houbraken tells us that the artist was a prisoner in the fortress for a time ; we also learn it from the *Académie* of the reliable Bullart, who says Brouwer was arrested for "étant allé au Chateau vétu á la Hollandoise." Van den Branden will not hear of this being the reason, as the dress of the Dutch and Flemish was almost the same. We can admit this without being obliged to doubt the correctness of Bullart's statements. Could not the artist have paraded his partisanship of Holland in the fortress, where, as we shall see later, he was well known, by some badge, for instance, the colour of his clothes, a ribbon, or something similar ? Does not that map of the siege of Breda—which is perhaps in close connection with his imprisonment—speak for this ? Had he, in his adventurous life—Van den Branden himself brings forward this supposition—also taken part in the siege of Breda in 1625, and indeed on the side of Holland, so that the suspicions of the Spaniards were aroused by his possession of the map, by something remarkable in his clothing, and by his behaviour ? This conjecture, does not appear too bold when we take into consideration what we already know about Brouwer. Does not the circumstance of the youth's

having run away from his father's house without leaving a trace behind him—always supposing Herr Rapsaet's statements to be correct—make such a period of adventure in his life almost seem probable? And does not the chance remark of such a reliable witness as de Bie that Brouwer “waneer hy (op Zee ghewesst hebbende) van den vyandt gans berooft was” rather refer in this connection to a military expedition in which he was engaged as a mercenary than (as Bullart says) to his being robbed by pirates when on a journey?

But let us leave these conjectures which permit the imagination to roam far and return to facts, to the documents. The interesting information that Brouwer was really a State prisoner in the fortress at Antwerp (and by no means for a short time as Bullart maintains) we again owe to the artist's talent for running into debt. It seems probable, from the inventory of his scanty possessions being drawn up by the notary of Brouwer's pupil and friend Craesbeeck, that some wealthy acquaintance was interesting himself for the artist. This conjecture is confirmed by a deed of little later date, from October 5, 1632, in which all Brouwer's property is made over by the lawyer Anselmo de Cocquiel to Signor van den Bosch, one of Brouwer's creditors, “to prevent its seizure by another creditor.” Van den Bosch, a rich Antwerp silk-merchant, was apparently at that time one of the artist's privileged patrons, as in spite of the worst experiences, and only to secure occasionally a picture from his hand, he was willing to lend him large sums. In that deed which the artist signed in the fortress on February 23, 1633, he undertakes to pay off his debt of 1600 florins to Jan van den Bosch by monthly

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instalments of 100 florins beginning from March 1, the payment to be made in his own paintings "valued at such fair prices as to permit of profit to himself, seeing that Van den Bosch had waited so long for his money, and would not get it back yet or receive any interest for it." On September 23, in the same year, in the presence of his old acquaintance Jan Dandoy, and while still in the fortress, Brouwer makes out another promissory note for Jan van den Bosch, this time for 500 florins, which should pay the expenses of his keep ("montkosten") during his imprisonment. For this sum the artist engages, within a period of two months to paint two pictures, the prices of which he shall fix himself, for the postmaster Jacques Roelants of Antwerp. A promissory note for 1516 florins, which Brouwer signed for the same creditor on the same day with the clause that if he did not keep this time to the term fixed for return of payment, whether in money or pictures, "he would be prosecuted and convicted without mercy" is probably only a prolongation of the old promissory note from February 23, the amount of which is only lessened by 84 florins; according to the agreement, the sum paid off should have been 600 florins.

Houbraken relates that Brouwer met in the fortress the Duke of Arenberg—who is also said to have been a prisoner there—and owed his deliverance to him. But Philips Karel, Duke of Arenberg and Aarschot, who is not very favourably known in the history of art by his rude behaviour to Rubens, was never imprisoned in Antwerp; and another Arenberg, the Prince of Brabanson, whom Houbraken might have confused with him, was thrown into prison in the year 1634. Brouwer will have owed his



liberation to the intervention of his influential friends in Antwerp as well as to his own behaviour, which probably was little like that of a spy. It is very likely that his release followed that payment by Jan van den Bosch of the sum of 500 florins for "montkost." But how was it possible that one single prisoner, in seven months or a little longer, could run up for his food alone such a debt as 500 florins, which is about equivalent now to 8000 marks (£400). In the prison itself this was indeed not possible; but for those prisoners who were allowed to move about freely within the fortress (and Brouwer must have been one of them) there were all kinds of expensive temptations, which he was the last man to resist. Van den Branden gives us interesting information about the life in the fortress. Inside the walls there were a mill, bakers' shops, breweries, and above all they had a wine tavern of their own, the only one in Antwerp where wine and beer were on draught free of duty, so that the liquors were to be had pure and of the best quality. The strong Spanish garrison was almost completely shut off from the town, where it was immeasurably hated and feared, and was thrown on the resources of the narrow space within the walls of the fortress for the supply of its needs, as well as for its amusements and recreations. Although the wine and beer taverns of the fortress were difficult of access from the town, yet they were the secret goal of the young tipplers of Antwerp. The taverns with their cheap and excellent foreign drinks exercised the strongest attraction in spite of all prohibitions of the town authorities, who frequently repeated their warnings and raised the fines imposed. The bakers' shops, the mill, and those public-



houses were also in the hands of good Flemings, in whose families they were hereditary. Brouwer not only met good boon companions there, but also able colleagues. Jan Grison, the proprietor of the wine-shop, had two sons, who were picture-carvers; the brother of the baker, Aart Tielens, was the well-known landscape painter Jan Tielens, who lived with his relations in the fortress; and the husband of 'Tielens' niece, Joos van Craesbeeck, who was first a journeyman in his father-in-law's bakery, and took over the business after his murder, was Brouwer's greatest admirer, and most able pupil. Brouwer seems to have been a good friend of his before his imprisonment; for, as we said before, it was the notary Frans Marcelis, who was always employed by Craesbeeck, who drew up Brouwer's inventory in the year 1632.

The free tone and the wild manners of the southern soldiery whom they had to wait upon seem to have found their way into this gathering of Flemish tradesfolk, who were all nearly related to one another (Craesbeeck's wife Johanna was, on her mother's side, Jan Grison's granddaughter). The dreadful death of the old baker Tielens, and the way in which his journeyman Craesbeeck won his daughter's love, and afterwards haggled over the price of blood for his father-in-law's death, speak for this. Time did not drag in the fortress with this very mixed, pleasure-loving company, and with the foreign adventurers; companions with similar artistic tastes met at the tavern table there, and there, too, the imagination was stimulated in many and various ways. The sum of 500 florins which Brouwer spent on food and drink in little more than six months is eloquent testimony of this.

We do not know exactly when Brouwer was released ; but I imagine, as remarked above, that the payment of his "Montkosten" by his friend Jan van den Bosch on September 23, 1633, was immediately followed by his discharge, and was intended to free him from his new creditors in the fortress. In the Antwerp documents we meet him six months later. On April 26, 1634, he went to board and lodge with the engraver, Pauwel du Pont, who at that time lived with his young wife, Christiana Herselin, in his father-in-law's house, in the Everdijkstraat. The artist stayed a long time with Pontius, perhaps till his death, a proof that he knew how to conduct himself in a well-ordered household, presided over by a worthy woman. The new friend was probably the cause of his joining the more sedate and aristocratic class of the Antwerp artists and sharing their mode of life and their amusements. In the year 1634-35 he was received into the Lucas Guild as a member of the Rederijderskamer, together with Pontius and his friend Peeter de Jode, and was also present at the banquet of the Guild. We find him mentioned with these artists in the years 1635-36, and again in 1636-37, as a member of this literary society, and as taking part in their festivals. Through Pontius he will probably have made the closer acquaintance of Rubens, with whom, as we saw, he came in contact immediately at the beginning of his stay in Antwerp. The statement of later writers that Rubens had made the attempt to receive Brouwer into his own house, but had soon been obliged to abandon the idea on account of his disorderly way of living, does not sound at all improbable. The fact that the great artist had no fewer than seventeen

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of Brouwer's paintings in his collection, in spite of the high price they fetched, proves the great regard Rubens had for his art. He was certainly deeply interested in, and stood in direct communication with the man himself, for Brouwer's pictures were very seldom in the market. Most of them went in lieu of payment to his art-loving creditors, who, in return, were always ready to advance new loans. As Du Pont had personal relations with Rubens, whose works he engraved, Rubens may have been the cause of the former receiving Brouwer into his house.

Our artist does not, indeed, like most of his fellow-artists, become a sober burgher in these new surroundings, the love of adventure has taken too deep root for that. He still remained in close connection with his easy-going friends. On July 26, 1634, he stood godfather to a child of Jan Dandoy's, his oldest creditor in Antwerp, in whose debt he still was at his death. In his last few years Brouwer found a good friend in Gijsbrecht van den Cruyse, the proprietor of the "Robijn," the most popular artist-tavern in Antwerp at that time; he painted for him a small picture, "Toebackdrinckers." In Cruyse's ledger the sum of 32 florins 13 stivers, which was never paid, is entered against the artist's name. With his debts and his tardy payments he was indeed the same as ever. On February 12, 1635, he appears with his landlord, Du Pont, and with their mutual friends Peeter de Jode and Anton van der Does as witnesses, before the notary Theodoor Ketgen, to acknowledge himself his landlord's debtor for the sum of 297 florins (225 florins for nine months' board and lodging, the remaining 72 florins for money advanced), and to assign to him in lieu of payment a picture by Joos van Cleef



another by A. van Dyck representing three heads, and a small picture from his own hand, a "Bordeeltken," which he promises to finish. We already know the painting by van Cleef from Brouwer's inventory drawn up in 1632; at that time he did not yet own the van Dyck, which was perhaps a sketch of the well-known picture of Charles I., taken from three sides; it is now in Windsor Castle, and from it Bernini modelled the king's bust. Van den Branden is therefore probably correct in his supposition that van Dyck, who moved to England in the spring of 1632, painted the artist for the well-known engraving on his first longer visit to Antwerp in 1634, and at this time either gave him the picture or exchanged it with him for something else.

In the summer of 1636 we become acquainted with some new friends of Brouwer's, two Dutch artists, Jan Lievens and Jan Davidsz de Heem; Lievens had come to Antwerp from London, and de Heem had arrived a short time before from Utrecht. On March 1, 1636, Brouwer signed a deed with these artists relative to the admission of a pupil into Lievens' studio. That the artist remained at least in closer connection with Jan van Heen is proved by a claim made by him on Brouwer's estate after his death. This occurred unhappily all too soon. On February 1, 1638, the "Painter Brouwer" was buried by the Carmelites for—18 stivers. The body was afterwards removed from the churchyard to the Church of the Carmelites. Sandrart's statement that the exertions of his friends brought this about, and that he was followed to his last resting-place by a great number of the artists and art lovers of Antwerp we may the more readily believe, as Sandrart, a few



years after Brouwer's death, lived for a long time in Antwerp. When Bullart writes that Brouwer's excesses were the cause of his death, we have no reason for doubting the truth of what he says, with our knowledge of the artist's life, as far as we can trace it with the help of documents. But still Houbraken's communication deserves consideration, according to which he died of the plague, which raged in Antwerp just in the spring of 1638. The sudden death, as well as the hurried burial, which took place without any ceremony and without his friends being informed, seem to speak for the artist's having been carried off by this terrible illness.

After Brouwer's death the Antwerp documents are not at once silent about him: they speak with well-known tongues, with those garrulous, accusing tongues which give us our most reliable information about the artist's life. On February 19, 1638, Jan Dandoy seizes his estate. On March 26 he is followed by Jan de Heem and Guillem Aerts, on June 4 by Maria Kints and Adriaen de Bie. We know from the above-mentioned inventory of the artist's "entire property" that there was little chance of the claims of his old friends and creditors being satisfied:

"Men sach naer sijne doodt niemant om't goedt crackeelen:—

Want hij niet achter liet als eenighe pinceelen,—

Met esel en pallet . . ."

We have lately obtained important information about that period of the artist's life before he came to Antwerp, and this throws an interesting light on his character. We learn that he really lived in Holland in his youth, and was

an artist of repute in Amsterdam and Haarlem in the years 1625 till 1627. A copy has been found of a poem on the battle of Pavia, by Pieter Nootmans, of Amsterdam, containing a long dedication to the "Constrijken en wijtberoemden Jongman Adriaen Brouwer, Schilder van Haarlem." In it Nootmans speaks of the many services his friend has rendered him, and begs him to defend his poem against evil tongues. The artist who, at the age of twenty-one, is called far-famed, shows here, as well as later in Antwerp, that he is fond of poetry. He was received into the Haarlem Retorijkerkamer, "In Liefde boven al," and in the year 1626 is entered as "Beminnaer." In a short poem he praises the verses of his friend Nootmans. Brouwer had resided in Amsterdam for some time before his stay in Haarlem; on July 23, 1626, in company with the painters A. van Nieulandt and Barent van Zomeren, he certifies before the notary that he has looked at different pictures in Amsterdam in the March of 1625. This van Zomeren was originally a painter, then took over a tavern, called at that time the "Shield of France," in which foreign actors used to give their performances.

These documents, which are unimportant in themselves, are valuable to us because they confirm the old information about Brouwer's longer stay in Holland, and also speak of him in connection with poets and actors there, so that the early stories about him carry more conviction. The statement of his being a pupil of Frans Hals in Haarlem does not appear a fabrication. This apprenticeship must indeed have been many years before the stay in Haarlem in 1626, of which the above-mentioned document relates, and in which he is called "far-famed." To judge from a very

coarse joke, which Houbraken declares he had from his colleague M. Carré, to whom it was often told by Frans Hals' daughter, who took part in it, this first stay was in the year 1623, therefore when the artist was about sixteen or seventeen years old. As Brouwer, according to all reports, was an extremely precocious genius, we may suppose that at that time he had been apprenticed to Hals for two or three years. The artist, therefore, was probably about as long a time in Holland, particularly in Haarlem, as he was later on in Antwerp. This helps us to understand Houbraken's authority, Nicolaus Six, giving Haarlem as the artist's birthplace, and that even an acquaintance and contemporary, Mattys van den Bergh, who grew up in Rubens's house, calls him on a drawing in the Berlin Print Room, "Adriaen Brouwer Harlemensis." If he was a Fleming by birth, his Dutch training might entitle him to be called a Dutchman. This accounts for so many pictures from his hand being in Holland in the seventeenth century, and that most of the engravings from his pictures are the work of Dutch engravers of that period. All the paintings which we now designate as youthful work—and their number has gradually and not inconsiderably increased—were certainly produced in Holland.

This documental information, though scanty and though it gives us a one-sided picture of the artist, leaves us in no doubt as to his character; in this respect it agrees so much with the verdict of the old biographers, that in a certain way it vouches for it. Even if those jokes and anecdotes, which a Houbraken, or even Brouwer's contemporaries Bullart and de Bie, relate, are very much exaggerated and partly invented, yet the documents leave no doubt that the artist



might have done all these things, that he probably played worse tricks, and that he was originally inclined to mad pranks, and to lead a dissolute life. We are accustomed to forgive an artist much nowadays, but it would be extremely unfair to judge a painter, who grew up in the stormy period of the Wars of Independence in the Netherlands, and of the Thirty Years' War, by the modern standard of morality and decorum. But Brouwer's libertinism, his wanton neglect of all propriety, his contempt of any kind of form was such as to make him more or less impossible in the "society" of his own time. That debt of five hundred florins which he contracted as a prisoner in the course of a few months for his keep, and also the contents of his studio tell us plainly enough that his real home was the low tavern, and that he had not only witnessed the scenes which he painted, but also occasionally taken part in them. These same documents testify to the fact that he was "indolent in painting, quick in spending," as they reveal what trouble and annoyance the painter's creditors had, not to get back their money—not one among them could probably ever boast of that—but after some long time to get a picture finished which had been pledged to them in lieu of payment.

The artist did not indeed drive things so far that he was quite shut out of the society of his colleagues: on the contrary, for a long time he was a member of the literary society in Antwerp as well as in Haarlem, and (a still better witness in this respect than the participation in some "artists' festivals") we find him boarding for several years in the house of a respected Antwerp artist and his good wife. His old friends also remained faithful to him, not



only the boon companions, but also the steady-going burghers, although he continued his annoying demands on their purse. Together with his never-tiring humour and droll ideas, which still live in every one of his pictures, he must have possessed personal accomplishments and qualities of heart and mind which made the careless libertine a delightful companion when there was no occasion to mind his eccentric ways and shabby clothes. Brouwer was a tall, handsome man ; we can judge of that still from the picture van Dyck has left us in his iconography. Large dark eyes animate the regular, manly features ; his tall figure has a proud bearing ; the delicately cut mouth with the twitching lips, as well as the eyes, whose pale lustre bears witness to the artist's life, reveal rapid perception, prompt judgment, ready wit. But his humour must have been thoroughly good-natured, as, indeed, all the stories of his pranks never hint at a malicious temper. His goodness of heart and his liberality knew no bounds. He was fond of poetry and music, a clever actor, a brilliant narrator and *causeur* ; he knew how to make friends with everybody. His simple ways and contempt of all petty vanities, which he denounced in word and in deed, made it easy to be on friendly terms with him. This contempt of outward form and empty honours did not affect Brouwer's highly developed self-respect and his great pride in his art. Several of Bullart's stories are characteristic of the artist's sentiments in this respect : for instance, the anecdote about the wedding which he left when he saw that he was made much of on account of his fine clothes ; or the tale that when the artist did not get the price agreed upon for the drawings which he had executed in dire want to satisfy his creditors, he

preferred to burn them rather than accept a smaller sum. In spite of having come down in the world, he loved his art more than anything else. It alone saved him from utter ruin.

To put it mildly Brouwer was a regular Bohemian, a dissipated genius—not indeed in the sense that his genius suffered under his way of living; on the contrary his art shows steady advancement till the time of his premature death. Let us hear what his two biographers Bullart and de Bie say about his personality: “Comme il avoit l’esprit facétieux,” says Bullart, “et porté à la débauche il en fit paraître les traits dans ses mœurs, aussi bien que dans ses ouvrages. Brouwer estoit extrêmement addonné au Tabac et à l’Eau de vie. Comme il n’aimait que le libertinage, et la boisson, il se négligeoit jusqu’au point qui d’estre les plus souvent couvert d’un méchant habit, qui le rendoit méprisable à ceux qui ne sçavoient pas combien il excelloit en l’art, et qui ne pénétoient pas plus avant que l’extérieur. —Il travaillait rarement ailleurs que dans le cabaret——.” De Bie’s verses say much the same:

’—Hy heeft altijd veracht al s’wereldts ydel goet.  
Was traegh in’t Schilderen, en milt in het verteren  
Met t’pijpen in den mont in slechte pis taveren,  
Daer leefden sijne jeught, schoon hij was sonder gelt  
Ghelijck hij meestendeel was al den dagh ghestelt  
—En soo hij was in’t werck, soo droegh hy hem in’t  
leven . . . ?

This irresistible inclination to “libertinism and drink” began perhaps in his youth which various signs lead us to suppose he spent as an adventurer. The circumstance that the young fellow left his father’s house and was not heard

of again till the latter's death, his close connection with actors, poets and proprietors of theatres, and the narration of his experiences on the boards: all this seems to show that the artist, as a lad, had tried his fortune on the stage, and then perhaps had become a mercenary soldier.

The solid foundation of the facts of Brouwer's life, obtained from the documents, helps us in criticising and dating his work. Now that we know that he spent the period of his apprenticeship in Holland and was active there as an independent artist for five or six years, we can clearly distinguish between the paintings of his perfected attainment, executed during his stay in Antwerp, and the youthful works painted in Holland. W. Bürger and W. Schmidt have declared the two pictures in the Rijksmuseum to be the work of P. Brueghel or one of his pupils; to-day no one will doubt their being Brouwer's youthful work. Round these pictures we can group about half a dozen similar paintings and a series of copies and engravings of those paintings which were all produced in Holland. These compositions, indeed, still show the tendency which is characteristic of old Pieter Brueghel's masterpieces. Sometimes we see peasants, with mercenaries and loose women, dancing or playing bowls at the fair outside the town; sometimes they are in the tavern, drinking, feasting, love-making, or falling foul of one another. There is no doubt as to Brouwer being the creator of these pictures; several bear the master's genuine monogram, some are mentioned in the documents or old inventories, others show affinity to the copies and engravings made during the artist's lifetime from nearly related pictures. These engravings are mostly the work of Dutch artists, of the two



Vischers, S. Savry, and others, and were brought out by Dutch publishers. To these and similar artists may be ascribed those engravings wrongly attributed to Brouwer himself who probably only furnished hastily executed drawings which were to serve as copies.

The master's earliest and coarsest compositions are only preserved to us in old copies: the "Peasants' Dance"—perhaps the picture which Rubens purchased in 1631—in a drawing by Rubens's pupil, M. van den Bergh (Berlin Print Room); the "Dance in the Barn," in a copy by Jan Hals in the Lyons Gallery; the "School" (which was in the market at the Hague in 1905), in a Dutch copy executed under the influence of the elder Brueghel; the coarse "Wedding" (known in Holland by the name of "de Pisser"), in a drawing by C. Dusart; a "Fair with Men playing Bowls" in a contemporary copy, probably by D. Ryckaert, which occasioned a law suit in 1632 (in Belgian private possession); the "Quarrel" in a drawing probably from Brouwer's hand and in the Dresden Print Room. Somewhat later were executed the related original paintings, "The Charlatan" in the Mannheim Gallery; the "Quarrel" in the Rijksmuseum, the tavern scenes also in the latter place, in the Bredius Collection at the Hague, and in private possession in Philadelphia, in the Schwerin Gallery, in the Waller Collection at Amsterdam (now in the market); and lastly a similar picture, very much painted over, in the market at Buda-Pesth. Common to all these pictures is the extremely coarse conception; the young artist depicts with much pleasure, deliberation, and humour the doings at these rustic festivals, the boisterous merriment with its accompanying excesses. The thick-set



figures with shapeless, sack-like garments on their angular bodies, with their big heads, ram's noses, and large mouths are still typically presented ; the composition is crowded, the colouring rich, occasionally the vigorous local colours make it almost too vivid, the drawing, particularly of hands and feet, is still perfunctory, the treatment is cautious, almost timid. Altogether the artist still nearly approaches, and at times betrays a certain dependence upon, the older and contemporary *genre* painters of Holland, D. Vinckboons, A. van de Venne, P. Bloot, P. Quast, G. de Heer and others. But in finished composition, in harmonious presentment, in striking characterisation, in the pleasure he takes in perfecting the details, in his feeling for colour, the young painter is far superior to the older men.

In the winter of 1631-32 Brouwer, of whom we have heard nothing since 1627, suddenly appears in Antwerp. The new surroundings, the brilliant artistic life of the place, particularly the influence of Rubens, who with his many pupils held sway in the Antwerp of that time like a prince with his court, all combined to develop the talent of the young artist speedily and fully. In Holland already he had been recognised and appreciated ; in Antwerp—partly, perhaps, owing to his unusual appearance and behaviour—he was at once received by the leading men, and sought out and invited by Rubens himself ; as we saw, indeed, without giving up his old habits and his lax way of living. Rubens' paintings first taught him what composition meant, he felt the deep understanding for nature, was sensible of the powerful vitality of his pictures, of their glowing colour, of the warmth and florid richness of

their tone, the free treatment—in short—everything in which he himself was still lacking. He now learnt much that was new, but without deviating in the slightest degree from the path which he had chosen.

Unhappily we have nothing certain to go by in dating the artist's work painted in these seven years in Antwerp before his death. There are more than a hundred paintings, all that we know of his with the exception of the few youthful works. Brouwer scarcely ever dated his pictures and none of the documents mention the exact period of production, but their artistic character and comparison with the first pictures painted in Holland render it possible to group them, and arrange them chronologically. Paintings like the "Card Players" in the Antwerp Gallery, the small tavern scenes in the Louvre and the Staedel Museum in Frankfort, as well as different small pictures representing doctors, in Vienna private galleries and other places, remind us of the best pictures of the last Dutch period. On the other hand the "Barber's Shop" and the "Fight" in the Munich Pinakothek, which look like companion pieces, are already perfect masterpieces. The finished composition of these pictures, in which the number of figures is wisely restricted and a wealth of piquant details—most skilfully subordinated—gives life to the whole, makes them at once masterpieces of telling dramatic effect; the characterisation is most rich and delicate, and rare taste is shown in the arrangement of the folds (so far as we can speak of such in connection with peasants' jerkins and leather breeches). Here too we find the most unerring drawing and pictorial colour-effect with unusually careful and yet free execution. There are still traces of

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the youthful works in the colour-combinations and partly, too, in the treatment ; yellow and red still dominate, but these tones are extremely delicate and most variously shaded off and blended with just as charming gray-bluish and violet colours. The general tone, too, is a similar light blonde one, but warmer than in the first paintings ; at the same time the chiaroscuro is more strongly developed and employed everywhere with the utmost discrimination. In the "Fight" the colouring is almost more delicate, the treatment in the light already enamel-like, in the shade and ground lighter and more sweeping. The lively rendering of the motive, the way in which the excitement of the moment is expressed and each figure brought in relation to the action is so masterly here, the composition and pictorial execution so excellent that in Antwerp at that time Rubens alone was capable of producing anything similar. Brouwer has created nothing more perfect in this direction, though in pictorial execution his later works surpass this one.

With this picture we approach the middle period of his activity, which includes about four years, from about 1633 till 1636, just the time, therefore, for which we have a fairly complete picture of the man. Most of the paintings preserved to us were painted then. As dates are entirely wanting it is impossible to define this period more exactly, to say when it began or when it ended ; still less is it possible to attempt a chronological arrangement of the works of this epoch. Speaking generally and judging by the character of the older works, as well as by that of the artist's very different, last paintings, we may assume that the pictures with more colour, in which the colour is laid



on thickly, in an enamel-like manner, are the older ones ; whereas the more monochrome paintings, in which the colour merges into tone, and the treatment is light and sweeping, are the later ones. The works of this period, short as it was, differ from one another in other ways and by no means slightly ; this is to be explained by the different conditions under which Adriaen worked, and the humour in which he happened to be ; his rich imagination also enabled him to present every situation in a new light, to give characteristic form to every individuality.

The Pinakotkek possesses about a dozen pictures from this time, and among them we again find some master-pieces, such as the delicately executed "Players," the "Fighters playing Cards," the "Brawl at the Cask," the hastily sketched "Five Peasants Fighting," all of them scenes which the artist, with the help of his drawings, has rendered offhand and fresh from memory. To this period belong several compositions, probably part of a series of the "Five Senses"; then the quite small, caricatured heads in the Dresden Gallery and in the Liechtenstein Collection ; another series of the "Seven Deadly Sins" which are scattered about in the Berlin Museum and in various Paris collections ; nearly all his *genre* pictures which are in English private galleries (not many and mostly of no great importance), among them the delightful "Lute Player" in the Victoria and Albert Museum ; the "Village Notary" at Lier near Antwerp, and others. The same motives occur repeatedly ; about a dozen pictures of fights in these few years, and yet what variety do we find ! In conception and arrangement, in colouring, chiaroscuro and treatment, the artist always brings some-



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thing new, something true, vivid and pregnant ; even in the wildest fighting scenes humour is the dominant note. With all his care to give an interesting presentment of the subject he never loses sight of the pictorial execution, he takes the greatest delight in finishing off every detail without ever forgetting the general effect which the picture is to produce.

Knowing as we do that Flemish art aimed at typical, Dutch art at individual development of its figures, it may astonish us at the first glance that all these pictures painted in Antwerp contain a wealth of individual figures, while the typical figures which are characteristic of the youthful works created in Holland, only occasionally appear in the background. But in Holland, in the School of Hals, the feeling for individuality of form had been aroused in the artist : in Antwerp, after the difficulties of pictorial execution had all been overcome, this feeling developed rapidly and continuously and must have been much easier of attainment, since, in the Antwerp taverns, he met a more mixed, frequently a more intelligent, set of people than in the villages outside Haarlem and Amsterdam. There were not only peasants, artisans and sailors, but Spanish mercenaries, footmen, and all kinds of doubtful characters usually to be found in the port of a great trading town.

To this period belong nearly all Brouwer's landscapes. Till a short time ago the artist was unrecognised as a landscape painter, though nearly all his pictures of this kind bear his signature. In this province, too, he is so individual, so great, that he deserves to be mentioned directly after Rubens. In some youthful works the forma-

tion of the landscape is strikingly delicate, but he appears to have painted regular landscapes, generally containing subordinate accessories, only in this middle period, and probably too in his last years. They are always impressions of nature, hastily written down and unassuming in form, but showing the most delicate feeling for light- and air-effects: low sand-hills, some bushes by the wayside, a hut, or a little village behind stunted trees, simple motives which he saw in the country outside Antwerp. In their effect of light and air, in their poetic mood, in their broad pictorial treatment, these pictures are more modern than the works of any landscapist of the seventeenth century; they vie at once with Cuyp's and A. van de Velde's most delicate poetical pictures. The "Landscape with the Shepherd" in the Kaiser-Friedrich Museum, the "Two Peasants on the Dunes" in the gallery of the Vienna Academy, and the similar, still more delicate picture in the Brussels Gallery (the only one signed with the full name), remind us of Daubigny's paintings, in the effect of the clear, blonde daylight; the hut on the dunes, where the quicksand has stunted the brushwood growing on the slopes and the blue ocean is seen in the distance (Thieme Collection, Leipzig), recalls to us similar motives by J. F. Millet; the moonlight effects (Kaiser-Friedrich Museum and a particularly striking work in the possession of M. G. Warneck, Paris), the pictures with an approaching thunderstorm, and the evening landscapes are full of genuine, forcible poetry. The landscape in a painted stone frame with spray of flowers by D. Seghers in the Bridgewater Gallery is one of the grandest poetical landscapes. The red roof of a house peeps through the scanty undergrowth

of a dune; gloomy thunder clouds, whose white heads throw weird lights over the landscape, roll up from the plain below, where the pastures and fields display a deep, rich green. The small landscapes with peasants playing bowls in the Berlin Gallery is equally effective. Still grander and also more striking from its unusual size is the "Sunset" in Grosvenor House, which is still admired there as a masterpiece of Rembrandt's. It is indeed a masterpiece; in the majestic presentment of the brilliant evening sky behind the dark masses of the trees, and in the light flickering on the calm surface of the water in the foreground we are reminded of Rubens' landscapes of gorgeous colour as well as of Rembrandt's gloomy evening scenes.

Characteristic of the paintings from the artist's last period, from the years 1636 and 1637 (he died on one of the last days of January 1638), is the subordination of the local colours under a gray tone which, however, remains clear and brilliant, even if it occasionally merges into blackish and then almost entirely suppresses the local colouring. Added to this the brush is handled with great lightness and firmness, the treatment is sweeping and in pictures of considerable size extremely broad. The liking for larger pictures as well as for much bigger figures is apparent in nearly all the works of this time. Occasionally we find a single half-length figure of almost life-size. Here too the Pinakothek must be mentioned first as possessing the greatest number and the most important of Brouwer's pictures. In the "Singing Peasants" and the "Soldiers Playing Dice" the moment chosen is extremely piquant, its conception lively, the individuality of the figures is



strikingly brought out, arrangement, delicate tone and pictorial treatment are all equally excellent. The heads and hands and feet are carefully executed when we compare them with two pictures of tavern scenes, which also belong to this group, and in which the host is the principal person. The smaller picture, "The Sleeping Host," almost looks like an improvisation; according to Bullart it was not unusual for the artist to do such work in the tavern. In the larger one, "The Host Coquetting with a Glass of Brandy," Brouwer's biggest picture in the Pinakothek, the figures are of unusual size, the tone inclines now to blackish, now to brownish tints, is sometimes gray, the scanty local colours show palely through it, the treatment of the thinly and fluidly painted background is indefinite and perfunctory, but the arrangement is masterly, the drawing firm and sure. The last picture shows great affinity to the "Smokers" in the Steengracht Gallery at the Hague, to the "Tavern" in the Haarlem Gallery, and to the broadly and vigorously painted "Operations" in the Staedel Museum at Frankfort, all of which are masterpieces of the artist's. The last-named collection also possesses the half-length, almost life-size picture of a young fellow who makes a wry face over a bitter draught; the "Smoker" in the Louvre is a kind of companion picture to it. They both nearly approach Frans Hals in lively, humoristic conception, in plastic effect, in breadth of treatment and in the general delicate gray tone. The Gallery of the Natural History Society in New York possesses a similar picture by delicate evening light, a young fellow examining a piece of money. To these late works also belongs a piquant, little portrait before a land-



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scape (perhaps of Brouwer himself) which the Hague Gallery acquired some years ago.

In spite of the short duration of Brouwer's artistic activity his development is very important and varied, a sign of the unusual talent of the artist whose way of living was not exactly calculated to grant him much time for quiet work. Therefore it is not difficult to discover certain characteristics which are common to all his works, the earlier as well as the later.

From the motives of his pictures we have made Brouwer's acquaintance as a genre painter and a landscapist. His genre pictures comprehend, almost exclusively, scenes from the life of the lower classes, the peasants and artisans. Occasionally we find among them a mercenary soldier or youths of doubtful character who have joined the company. Almost without exception the artist depicts the life of these people in the tavern: they are drinking, playing cards or smoking; sometimes we find them engaged in some harmless amusement, listening to the music of a violin, singing and dancing; but more often they have got so heated over their cards or drink that they have come to blows. With particular pleasure the artist takes us to the barber's shop where a peasant is having a cut received in the last fight plastered up, or an abscess is being lanced. It is strange that he scarcely ever touches upon one side of the life in these "Pistaveeren" and "Bordeelkens," that he rarely introduces women into his pictures. When he does so, as in several of his earliest works, it is only in the background, and then indeed he is coarse and a caricaturist. In most of his pictures we find no women at all. When they do appear

they are mostly hideous and old, and the younger ones are certainly not endowed with beauty or sensual charm. But if it happens that a peasant pays court to such a fair one, it is done so boorishly, in such a regularly Flemish way that it is impossible for any sensual emotion to be stirred in the spectator. May we herefrom venture a surmise with regard to a certain feature of Brouwer's character? His paintings, in all other directions, give us such a clear picture of his life. Was he altogether indifferent to women or had coarse enjoyment utterly blunted his finer feelings towards them?

In old inventories of personal estate and in catalogues of sales we find some other motives not known to us among the paintings we possess: an "Alchymist," "The Temptation of St. Anthony," a "Pastry Cook," and a "Painter's Studio." Representations which seem to have no connection with their title, as the series of the "Five Senses" or the "Seven Deadly Sins," are handled by the artist in the same manner as his usual delineations. This is to be observed in pieces still preserved.

The motives, as well as the composition of his paintings, show a harmonious, finished character. As a direct contrast with the gay scenes of fairs and national festivals of all kinds introduced by Pieter Aertsens and Pieter Brueghels into their pictures, and also depicted by the genre painters from the beginning of the seventeenth century, as well as by David Vinck-Boons and Jan Brueghel, and even later by Teniers, Brouwer takes a certain, single scene containing few figures for the centre point of his picture, which every single figure serves to explain and enliven. If there are some figures standing on

one side in the background, apparently having no connection at all with the principal group, they really serve to elucidate the action or to characterise the locality. This is true of all paintings of which we possess the originals. In some of his youthful works, which only exist in copies or reproductions by other artists, there is still something to be felt of that endeavour of the older school whose aim was indicated by Brouwer himself: to give a picture of the peasant class in general by means of a number of varied scenes.

In his composition, in the arranging of his figures, and even in the secondary accessories Brouwer shows clearness and understanding which would strike us immediately were it not for the simple and unassuming rendering. But the artist also possesses the reverse side of this capacity: if he understands how to arrange a rich representation clearly, he also knows how to fashion an interesting composition from the simplest motive, even from the hasty study of a head. This, too, results from his skill in making the most of the space at his disposal, while apparently paying no attention to the arrangement. Look at the small "Caricature" in the Dresden gallery, or the large "Tippler" in the Städel Museum. Brouwer's landscape motives possess, in their way, the same merits. The older, and partly also contemporary Flemish landscapists, endeavour to compress as rich a scenery as possible even into the smallest space, to give a kind of model of the earth in its varied form and with its varied life. Brouwer, on the contrary, only chooses quite a small section from nature which he handles with the same mastery as his simple genre motives, while employ-



ing similar means, so that a rich and finished composition results, which, in spite of hasty execution, occasionally produces the grandest effect.

In the artist's conception we are principally impressed by the striking characterisation of the motives as well as of the simple figures, by the dramatic life and humour. Probably no other painter, in any case no other genre painter, has been more successful in seizing the right moment in the action, has understood how to render the climax of the situation so convincingly and thrillingly. The single figures are also depicted in the same strikingly characteristic manner. We seldom meet the same person among them, much less the same type, as is the rule with David Teniers and A. van Ostade. In Brouwer's earliest pictures, we see the germ of this endeavour to individualise richly and variously; in the course of his development it becomes a matter of course that all the principal figures of his pictures are different and full of life. Only in the little, hastily sketched-in figures in the background, which are specially intended to round off the composition or to characterise the scene more fully, has Brouwer reproduced from memory typical figures from his tavern life. But here too, by means of a few strokes, he has rarely omitted to add some particular and individual feature, either in carriage or in expression.

In the dramatic life he gives his motive, in seizing the climax of the action he has chosen to represent, in the way in which all his figures operate together, even in choosing the accessories which are to elucidate the motive, Brouwer nearly approaches P. P. Rubens, the Grand Master of the Flemish School. An attempt, therefore, has been made to



assign our artist to his school. How the peasant's every nerve feels the operation the village barber is performing on him, its effect on the various bystanders, through whom it is brought home to us; how absorbed the fiddler is in his music which awakens an echo in the souls of the hearers; the hand-to-hand fight; the consequences of a peasant's carousal: all these and similar motives Brouwer depicts with such liveliness, with such intense inward excitement and outward movement as are only to be found in the transports of a saint, in the battles and Bacchanalia of a Rubens. And yet Brouwer always keeps within bounds, he always remains the simple delineator of morals, thanks to the humour which is the keynote of all his creations. This humour is so effective, because it is perfectly naïve and entirely without any secondary intention or purpose; at the same time, it is just as true and surprising as that of Jan Steen, who is often entirely wanting in naïveté. Brouwer's wit, too, with all its keenness, is always good-natured. Even in the most violent quarrel, in the fiercest fight no discordant note disturbs the humoristic mood. He does not, like his pupil Craesbeeck, show us the fearful consequences of the quarrel, we do not see the battlefield covered with the dead and dying, but the way in which his giants inflict slight wounds is quite as comical as the distortions and contorted faces caused by the heat of the combat.

Brouwer's landscapes show that he had the same keen eye for the natural world as for humanity, its passions and foibles. His feelings are here, indeed, expressed in quite a different way; in his landscape motives we make his acquaintance as a true poet, as one of those rare artists who

are familiar with the diversified surface of the earth and its grand phenomena, and understand how to transpose nature's moods into related feelings of the human soul.

From the conception in his works, we may hazard a conjecture with regard to his personality and character, the only other knowledge we possess being drawn from those not very flattering documents and the verdict of his contemporaries. May not the artist, perhaps unconsciously, have put something of his own nature into the lively, handsome young fellows who sometimes lead the vocal quartet, sometimes divert the rough company with playing the fiddle or jesting? Is not the inexhaustible humour which laughs at us out of all his works the image of his own gay and thoughtless temperament? His keen observation, his freedom from petty human vanities and follies, his witty and good-humoured sallies, his open mind for the beauties of nature: all these qualities of the man are reflected in his paintings.

Brouwer's artistic gifts have always been ranked very high and recognised even by those who shared the aversion of Louis XIV. of France to his race of *magots*. His paintings are first of all distinguished by perfect and masterly draughtsmanship. He alone, of all the painters of peasant life, has avoided the mistake—an easy one to make and one which A. van Ostade himself has sometimes fallen into—of forming *magots*, that is to say, typical figures, out of his awkward fellows in their unbecoming, ill-fitting dress. In his figures we cannot speak of conspicuously long proportions, of heads too small, or noses always too big: all are thoroughly individual. Hands and feet are drawn with the greatest delicacy; there is not the least

doubt as to their belonging to one another, as well as to the whole shape and the character of the surroundings. The artist has no trouble with the most difficult foreshortening. Not only does he fix upon the picturesque aspect of the costume, but he displays remarkable taste in its arrangement, particularly in the fall of the folds, which he so manages that they bring out the lines of the body instead of hiding them. To get a clear idea of the artist's masterly drawing, we must observe some subordinate detail in his pictures, let us say, the drawing of his shoes: we shall be astonished what study he has devoted to such a detail, with what a particular charm he has invested it.

When we call Brouwer a perfect draughtsman, the term is of course to be understood as applied to all colourists. A glance at his drawings shows how little he cared about an exact contour; with a few characteristic strokes he first of all gives the movement, indicates the action and draws the object which he considers adapted for pictorial representation. This he does under the most complicated conditions of colouring and lighting, air, and atmosphere. The art of fulfilling all these requirements at the same time shows his perfect mastery; and the apparent nonchalance with which he exercises it gives his pictures another and peculiar charm.

In the artist's early works the local colours have a vigorous, harmonious effect. Gradually the tone becomes more prominent, and finally almost suppresses the local colour altogether. Choice and combination of colour show his original, colouristic talent. In his youthful pictures it is a clear yellow which, by the side of vermilion, dominates over pale red, green, and neutral colours. Then, by



degrees, a deep brilliant green appears in the foreground, and with different shades of red, with blue, violet, and clear neutral colours, forms a most singular and charming colour-concert. In his later period a brilliant gray tone, sometimes inclining to blackish, becomes so prominent that, by the side of it, the local colours—a pale steel-blue and different pale red and violet tones—seem only faintly indicated. The colours have still a rather cold and metallic effect in his earliest pictures, but in the middle and sometimes too in the last period, Brouwer's works possess an extreme brilliancy, harmony, and delicacy of tone.

Brouwer's handling of the brush goes through a not unimportant development. In his first paintings it seems rather too dry and firm, in consequence of the peculiar touches with which his lights are put in; in the middle period the treatment is rugged and enamel-like in the light; in the shade and in the background, on the contrary, it is light and sweeping, permitting the warm, light-brown ground to shine through here and there. The treatment is smoother and more even in his latest works, the thin colour is laid on in broad, firm strokes, and only here and there we find a strong light put in with thicker colour. In tone and colouring this manner reminds us strikingly of Franz Hals's contemporary middle epoch, particularly in his genre pictures.

In conclusion let us consider Brouwer's artistic individuality in its relation to the nature of Flemish and Dutch art. The wealth of individual figures, as well as the delicate, humoristic conception, are characteristic Dutch features, whereas their vitality, passion, and movement are Flemish, and developed under Rubens's influence.



In Brouwer's conception of the landscape, which has a very individual character—far removed from the influence of any school—the element of mood as well as the perfect air-perspective are less a Flemish than a Dutch peculiarity. On the other hand, in the very pronounced local colours we might again discover a characteristic trait of the Antwerp school of painting, did not Brouwer's pictorial development, in contrast to Rubens's, show the tone gradually suppressing the local colour. But quite apart from this, Brouwer's colouring, in his first as well as in his middle period, differs essentially from the colouristic principles of contemporary Flemish painters, particularly from Rubens, and, in his earlier paintings especially, shows more affinity to the pictures of the oldest Dutch genre painters. The circumstance is also of importance that any connection between his art and that of the older Flemish school is entirely wanting; on the other hand we find indications of his conception in Holland. Affinities with old P. Brueghel, who died in 1569, and with his contemporaries and immediate followers are hardly to be discovered. But in the different Dutch towns in the twenties appeared a number of painters of the peasant genre who, in their motives, in the simple composition, in conception and characterisation, as well as in colouring, follow Brouwer's youthful works so closely that they have lately been frequently ascribed to one or other of them. Such artists are A. van de Venne, Pieter Quast, Pieter Bloot, G. de Heer, P. J. and C. Monincx, Potuyl, P. de Stom, the Monogramist E.M., and other lesser painters and draughtsmen (whose names rarely occur and are little known) in the style of the above-mentioned masters. Then among the

younger painters, whose period of work was about contemporaneous with that of our artist, Andries Both, Cornelis Saftleven, partly too, A. van Ostade, must also be mentioned. By studying Brouwer's works, therefore, we arrive at the same conclusion to which examination of the older deeds and documents has led us: Brouwer, a Fleming by birth, received his artistic education in Holland, probably as the pupil of Frans Hals, and essentially with the help of this training and without being particularly influenced by the Flemish school continued his development later and independently in Antwerp.

We saw in what great demand our artist's paintings were with his contemporaries. The greatest artists esteemed him most highly; in Rubens's Collection there were seventeen of his pictures, more than those of any other painter, and Rembrandt possessed eight paintings and a sketch-book with drawings from his hand. The prices paid for his small pictures were just as high as those given for the large paintings of these famous masters. When we consider the sensation made by Brouwer's work among artists themselves we can understand the great influence it had upon the development of the genre. As a teacher, indeed, he could not exercise this influence, in consequence of his short life and irregular way of living. According to the "Liggeren,"<sup>1</sup> he only had one real pupil, Jan Baptiste Dandoy, now unknown as a painter and the son of a friend and creditor, the dissipated tradesman and tavern-keeper, Jan Dandoy. The second pupil, Joos van Craesbeeck, who is always spoken of as such, was not apprenticed to him as the "Liggeren" state, but in a way

<sup>1</sup> Books containing the Guilds' statutes,

learnt from him by watching him paint in the taverns and in the fortress. But Brouwer's paintings and their widely-diffused copies have exercised all the greater influence in the Spanish Netherlands as well as in Holland, and this influence made itself felt till the end of the seventeenth century. The low genre in the Netherlands is absolutely under Brouwer's influence. This is especially the case with the work of David Teniers. The pictures he produced while associating with Brouwer, about between 1634 and 1638, are so closely akin to his that they are not infrequently taken for them. Teniers, indeed, owes his best work to his model; when its attraction for him declines, his pictures at once become weaker. Other Flemish genre painters, Craesbeeck, the two Ryckaerts, even Gonzales Cocx in his rare genre pictures, are as strongly influenced by the artist as Teniers. We may say the same thing about the Dutch genre painters. The old Dutch genre had exercised a certain influence upon Brouwer himself in his youth; but he too had a retrospective influence upon the art of the same masters from whom he learnt, upon Der Quast, Bloot, De Heer, and others. Several of his contemporaries are his real followers, the Rotterdam Cornelis Saftleven, who lived in Antwerp about the beginning of the thirties, and the fellow-townsmen of the latter, Hendrik M. Sorgh, who was about the same age. Adriaen van Ostade's youthful pictures plainly show that he took Brouwer's earliest works, which were produced at Haarlem, for his model. Later on A. Diepraem, P. Verelst, Egbert Heemskerk and others educated themselves by a direct study of his work, and even artists like Jan Steen, Bega, and Dusart have



painted pictures in which they have openly taken our artist for their model.

It is, then, this master, who, more than any other notable artist, has been reproached with leading an unbridled and licentious life, who has left an indestructible monument to posterity in his paintings, and at the same time has exercised through them a happier and more lasting influence on the genre picture of his time than any other painter before or since.



## RUBENS AND VAN DYCK

### ANTON VAN DYCK AS FELLOW-WORKER OF PETER PAUL RUBENS

RUBENS and Van Dyck, who are admired as a brilliant constellation in the Flemish art-firmament, were countrymen; their origin is similar; they grew up in the same surroundings, and had the same princely patrons; and yet their character and way of living as well as their art are essentially different. Rubens is great, many-sided, and harmonious; with his gifts and training he almost appears like a grand figure of antiquity. Van Dyck, on the contrary, is one-sided, excitable, and sensitive, self-willed, and at the same time a dependent nature; a Romanticist almost in the modern sense. Like his teacher, he was loaded with honours and riches from youth, but he had neither his popularity nor did his success make him contented with his profession. "The pupil with his weak frame and his restless spirit—(this is how Max Rooses characterises the two artists)—roams on and on without ever reaching that goal which would have brought him satisfaction and the power of clothing his idea in harmonious and congruous form. The teacher, healthy alike in mind and body and calm in the consciousness of his

strength, gazed with unshaken content at his brilliantly and perfectly expressed ideal, and ruled in the realm of art like a great prince." The character of the art of the two masters and their artistic development is set forth in these words. Rubens's development was slow but continuous; he submitted himself to the most various impressions, absorbing them consciously and deliberately, and only fully perfected his own style when he had reached the meridian of life. Anton van Dyck, on the other hand, is an accomplished master when little more than a youth, and develops a facility and power of work scarcely to be found in the most experienced decorative painters at the height of their career. But every strong outside impression affects him powerfully, turns him aside into another path which he follows with enthusiasm, till he again falls under the influence of another and different impression. Instead of the original and manly force, instead of the sparkling life which distinguishes the works of Rubens, the paintings of his pupil are marked by a peculiar nervousness which at first makes itself felt in romantic laxity. However this soon changes into a certain sensibility, almost sentimentality, united with academic endeavour towards beauty of form and elegance. On the other hand, Van Dyck, without possessing the individuality or the imagination of his great master, has, as portraitist, and in consequence of his dependence on the model, the merit of fully grasping and respecting the personality. His portraits have something of his own lively spirit, of his own chivalrous nature, and are thus invested with a quite peculiar charm. Therefore in the different epochs of his activity, in which, too, his portraits appear

very different, Van Dyck, as portrait-painter, nearly approaches, or even takes full rank with, the greatest masters of this art.

In spite of this gulf between master and pupil, the works of the two artists during a short period of their lives are so nearly related that it is difficult to distinguish them. So difficult, indeed, is it that until a short time ago the majority of Van Dyck's paintings of his early period were ascribed to Rubens, and are even still admired by some as his masterpieces. This is explained by that impressionable and dependent element in Van Dyck's nature which led to his almost assimilating the manner of Rubens' during those years in which he was his fellow-worker and pupil. At any rate the two artists' pictures painted between about the years 1617 and 1621 look so much alike that they may be confused. But if they are inspected more closely, and if we have fully grasped the character of Van Dyck's youthful works, then we distinguish the different artist-nature speaking out of the artistic feeling which created them. There is no lack of such pictures, all of which are attested by contemporary documents.

Modern documental research has brought to light records of a certain tedious lawsuit carried on in Antwerp to decide the genuineness of a series of Van Dyck half-length figures of Christ and the Apostles. The artist's friends and pupils testify that already in the year 1615 Van Dyck painted such a series of pictures, and that Herman Servaes, a younger pupil, copied them. These Apostle pictures, as well as their copies, are preserved to us. While the latter have lately been brought from Schleissheim to Burghausen in Bavaria, the originals are now scattered: the Dresden



Gallery has five, four others, probably the best of the series, belong to Earl Spencer at Althorp; the Louvre (from the Lacaze Collection), the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, and the Besançon Gallery (Gigoux bequest) each possesses one. Whether these twelve pictures make up the original series, or whether one or the other is a free copy, must be decided by careful examination and comparison. In the Gallery at Sans Souci are two half-length figures of Christ and Mary which are very nearly related to these paintings; they all show close connection with Rubens, and are characterised by vigorous chiaroscuro, coarse and fugitive treatment, and much youthful exaggeration.

In the same lawsuit in which those Apostle figures are mentioned, another youthful work is spoken of which is still in existence: "The Drunken Silenus." This picture is either the Silenus with two Bacchic companions, now in the Brussels Gallery, or the similar painting signed with a monogram in the Dresden Gallery; a Moor has been added to the group in the latter picture. Both have the same character as those Apostle pictures. The one in Brussels is more fugitive in treatment and less true to nature; it appears to be the earlier, and was painted in 1617, or even in 1616. The Dresden picture, which is also attested by contemporary engravings, appears to be influenced by Rubens's large Bacchanal in Munich; the composition is a free copy of it.<sup>1</sup>

The beautiful portrait of himself in the Pinakothek at Munich is attested as being a youthful work of Van Dyck's

<sup>1</sup> The half-length picture of a Satyr, of brilliant colour, which was for a time in the A. Thiem Collection at San Remo, was probably executed in connection with these pictures.



by his age at the time, as well as by the evidence of old documents. If it is not the original painted in 1618, and engraved by Meyssens, it is a copy produced a little later with unimportant alterations. The artist has painted his own portrait with unusual care and love.

Besides these attested pictures we may claim a series of other paintings as Van Dyck's youthful work. We are justified in doing so by their internal affinity with those pictures, by their origin, by tradition, or by other indirect proof. In the first place, all the artist's paintings, which were in possession of Rubens, and were sold with his collection in 1641, were evidently painted before his journey to Italy. For when the young artist returned to Antwerp in 1627, Rubens had just lost his wife, Isabella Brant, and sought to forget his trouble in travelling and in diplomatic work. He was therefore only at home occasionally till his marriage with Helene Fourment, at the end of the year 1630. Soon after, Anton van Dyck, who does not seem to have renewed his old connection with his master, went to England for good. These purely external reasons show that the eight large pictures belonging to Rubens, and from the hand of his pupil, were painted while the latter was working in his studio as his assistant. Happily we have more or less definite information about these pictures. Two of them are copies on a rather smaller scale of paintings which belong to a series of pictures of the Passion. The originals are now in the Berlin Gallery and in an American collection.

The two Berlin pictures, "The Mocking of Christ" and "The Descent of the Holy Ghost," were acquired with the "Two Johns," who were perhaps the patron saints of

the church for which the pictures were painted. Prince Henry brought them from the Netherlands to Berlin about the year 1775. They are externally attested by the large inscription on the "Two Johns": "A<sup>io</sup> van Dyck fecit." Although of very different artistic worth, all three have most emphatically the same character, and are stamped as youthful works by the exaggeration of Rubens's manner, by the colossal size of the figures, by the peculiar drawing of the hands and feet—fingers and toes are spread out—by the glowing hues, the deeper and warmer colouring. In the "Mocking of Christ," and partly also in the "Two Johns"—for which, it may be said, the Academy in Madrid possesses a clever sketch—these peculiarities of the master appear, on the whole, to advantage, but in the "Descent of the Holy Ghost" they are distorted to caricature. In the "Mocking of Christ" the pupil far surpasses the teacher and nearly approaches the great Venetian masters in the gorgeous and vigorous colouring, in deep feeling, and in luminous tone. The freedom and breadth of execution harmonise most happily with the glorious and luminous colours. They are often only indicated in the shade; the contours are put on the thin gray ground with broad, sweeping brush strokes, while in the lights the colours are laid on broadly and thickly. In this way the picture gets its extremely fresh impression, and at the same time the forms do not appear so exaggeratedly colossal as they really are.

The "Two Johns" possess the same merits in colouring and treatment. But the motive was not so well suited to the artist's capacity. These two single figures require a certain monumental calm; instead of that the artist's

nervous excitability comes out unfavourably and strongly. As a consequence of the slighter structure of the picture, the exaggerations and faulty drawing are more apparent than is the case in richer, more diversified compositions, as the "Mocking of Christ." In this respect the third painting, the "Descent of the Holy Ghost," might appear a more favourable motive. When we find that this picture is in every way inferior, even to the "Two Johns," the probable reason is that the artist was utterly wanting in the deep and earnest conception necessary for the comprehension of such an entirely inward, transcendental subject. His youthful impetuosity in this first period of his career was bound to turn such a motive into a caricature. He has trouble in the first place with the composition: the figures are involved, and in part awkwardly arranged; instead of rendering the inward enthusiasm and agitation, he has been content to present the Apostles and Mary in a state of hectic excitement which has an almost repulsive effect. A third picture of the Passion series, the "Christ taken Prisoner," has lately passed from Lord Methuen's Gallery at Corsham House into an American collection. This picture nearly approaches the "Mocking of Christ" in conception and artistic worth.

In the Prado Gallery in Madrid there are copies of two pictures of this series "Christ taken Prisoner" and of the "Mocking of Christ;" Philip IV. bought them in 1641 at the sale in Antwerp of Rubens's collection and artistic personal estate. These pictures had been painted on commission for an abbey at Bruges; Rubens found out the two whose motives best suited the young artist's talent, and ordered copies of them for his own gallery. The



master had undoubted influence on their execution, and therefore in composition, particularly in expression, and in artistic quality they are far superior to the first examples. The "Crowning with Thorns" is rather smaller; by omitting several figures the composition has become clearer, the colouring is less vivid and the flesh tints not so exaggeratedly warm as in the Berlin picture. The "Christ taken Prisoner" is also superior to the larger picture with the same motive at Corsham House. Here Van Dyck decidedly rises to the level of his master's art. The exciting scene pulsates with powerful life without our being disturbed by those exaggerations which mar the first example. The torchlight makes the colour-effect singularly impressive. Light-effect, colouring, and artistic treatment remind us of Titian's masterpieces from his last period, as well as of the "Crowning with Thorns" in Munich and in the Louvre. The advice of the master for whom Van Dyck executed the copies has everywhere kept the young artist's exuberant force within bounds, has preserved him from exaggeration, and has drawn out his extraordinary gifts in the most marvellous way. In the feeling alone, in the noble figure of the Saviour whose exalted bearing is an effective contrast to the roughness of the executioners, this picture is one of the most remarkable ever produced by Flemish art. And yet it is surpassed by the large—in its way carefully executed—sketch in the Cook Gallery at Richmond.

With these pictures the number of the original works produced by Van Dyck in this short space of about three years is by no means complete. With the help of some works attested by documents or by the statements of contemporaries as belonging to this early period, and by



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comparison with the above-mentioned paintings of the Passion Cycle we can now adduce more than ten times its number. Among them—and in addition to works executed for Rubens after his sketches—is a series of paintings of large dimensions which he created during the time from his nomination as Free Master till his departure for Italy.

The “Bearing of the Cross” in the Church of the Dominicans at Antwerp is attested as one of his earliest works. It is a painting nearly approaching those other presentments of the Passion; perhaps it belonged originally to the same cycle. A whole series of paintings of St. Jerome also belong to this period; two of them were in Rubens’s collection. Among them there is that great picture, “St. Jerome Kneeling in Penance,” which is now in the Dresden Gallery. It is a colouristic masterpiece, Van Dyck has rarely created such a grandly characteristic figure. A smaller picture with the same motive, in the Prado Gallery, looks like a preliminary sketch. In the Liechtenstein Gallery is a still earlier “St. Jerome in Prayer.” The artist cleaves to his model here; the deformed old man is given with coarse fidelity. The large St. Jerome in the Stockholm Gallery, of which we possess various old copies, follows Rubens closely, particularly his painting with the same motive in the Dresden Gallery; it therefore also seems to be a work executed before the Dresden picture.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A slight and small sketch for this picture was in the R. Kann Collection at Paris. I do not remember the same presentment in Lord Spencer’s Gallery at Althorp, quoted by Waagen, nor can I give any information about that St. Jerome mentioned by Waagen as a youthful work, and in the possession of Mr. Matthew Anderson.



*Anderson*

VAN DYCK  
CHRIST TAKEN PRISONER  
IN THE COLLECTION OF SIR FREDERICK COOK, AT RICHMOND

*To face p. 306*



Characteristic figures with sharply pronounced features, like that of St. Jerome, exactly suited the young artist's feeling and talent. We find many different paintings of St. Magdalene from this period; she is generally presented half-length, as an austere penitent looking remorsefully upwards. One of these pictures is in the Oldenburg Gallery. Sir Frederick Cook at Richmond possesses a second similar painting; the great and principal work is in the Rijksmuseum. A very similar work, a woman looking up passionately, in the Hofmuseum at Vienna, is not intended for a Magdalene, but is a study for a woman's figure in the grand picture of the "Adoration of the Serpent" in the Museo del Prado in Madrid. The motive of this picture was one particularly suited to the young artist's gifts. The deep reddish colouring of the flesh, the drawing of the hands and feet, the typical figures are all characteristics of the young Van Dyck, and comparison with the "Christ taken Prisoner" which hangs in the same room, incontrovertibly establishes the authorship. The well-known painting with this subject from the hand of Rubens in the National Gallery proves how differently he conceived and depicted the same motive. "The Good Samaritan" from a Polish collection was recognised in the Van Dyck Exhibition in Antwerp in 1899 as a characteristic youthful work. Another, and justly much admired work which goes under the name of Rubens, the "St. Martin" in the Windsor Gallery, was recognised by Rooses as a work of Van Dyck's youthful period. It is very probably identical with the painting quoted in the sale of Rubens's Gallery. A series of generally less important pictures and studies from this



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time which we give below, have all unmistakably the same character.<sup>1</sup>

Many of the paintings with historical motives given in this list have been described by Max Rooses as the artist's youthful work; on the other hand, he thinks that only

<sup>1</sup> In Rubens's possession was also a mythological motive from the hand of Van Dyck, "Jupiter and Antiope." Max Rooses thought that he recognised this picture in the Munich Pinakothek (formerly in Schleissheim); but this picture is justly considered as only the work of a follower; the original was brought to England, and now belongs to Earl Wemyss at Gosford. Two copies by Van Dyck, which Rubens possessed, a "Charles V. on Horseback" (supposed to be after Titian) in the Uffizi, and "St. Ambrose" in the National Gallery, which is a smaller copy of the magnificent large painting by Rubens in the Hofmuseum in Vienna, are less important works of this period. A "Holy Family" in the Cook Gallery at Richmond, and the "Madonna with St. Anne," in the possession of S. Wedells in Hamburg, are closely akin to Rubens, also in the lighter, rather glassy colouring. The same may be said of "David and Goliath" in the Leuchtenberg Gallery at St. Petersburg, of the large "Entry of Christ into Jerusalem," which was in the Mersch Sale in Berlin in 1905, and of the "Mocking of Christ" in the Virnich Collection in Bonn (exhibited at Düsseldorf 1904). The "Crucifixion of St. Peter" in the Brussels Gallery (No. 262) nearly approaches the St. Jerome of the Dresden Gallery in the deep violet-red flesh-tints, in the dry laying on of the colours, and in the broad treatment. The large "Martyrdom of St. Sebastian" in the Munich Pinakothek is lighter but also brighter in colour. The smaller picture with the same motive and the nearly related "Susanna" in this Collection show the immediate influence of the Venetian masters, particularly of Tintoretto, in the pictorial treatment and colouring, in the tone effect, and in the chiaroscuro. Young Van Dyck knew many of Tintoretto's works from his master's collection. The youthful head of Sebastian, a faithful portrait of the artist, proves that these pictures were also painted about 1618-19. A smaller picture of nymphs pursued by satyrs in the Berlin Gallery is of similar Venetian brilliancy of colour. The large picture under the name of Rubens in the Dulwich Gallery, "Samson and Delilah" (No. 168), I consider a coarse, very early work by Anton van Dyck. Then follows a particularly carefully executed work in the Gallery of Buckingham Palace, "Christ Healing the Sick"; it shows

one portrait, that of a man, in the possession of Mr. Alfons della Faille in Antwerp, may be ascribed with probability to this period. But the portraits from this first period may be reckoned by dozens; I recognise such pictures, for instance, in a series of paintings which are still admired as Rubens's masterpieces. The eighteenth century had a more

the greatest affinity to Rubens, but is given rightly under Van Dyck's name. "Christ and the Little Children," a very characteristic youthful work, was bought at the sale of the Marlborough Gallery by an English lady; it is really a Flemish family picture, the Biblical motive was only a pretext. The art-dealer, E. Warneck in Paris, possessed at that time two studies of heads for this picture. Various studies of heads, showing hasty but very effective treatment, are not infrequent; they generally appear under Rubens's name. The Apostle looking upwards in the Berlin Gallery, and the study of an old man for the above mentioned picture, the "Descent of the Holy Ghost," in the same place, are also considered his work. The latter is interesting; the hasty but very clever sketch of Jordaens, for whom the young artist had probably executed it, is painted upon paper then pasted on wood, and finished off all round. The half-length figure of the Apostle Peter in the same Museum and acquired with the Suermondt Collection is less important. The Brussels Gallery has lately bought a similar head of an old man looking upwards; it is also probably a study for the "Descent." The study with the heads of negroes in the Brussels Gallery is equally characteristic. The Munich Pinakothek, the Augsburg and Bamberg Galleries, possess other hastily executed studies of heads from this period; the last-named collection has even three of the kind, apparently also studies for the above mentioned Apostle pictures. There is a "Praying Monk" in the Nostiz Gallery in Prague, which may be mentioned together with studies of heads in the Moltke Gallery in Copenhagen (No. 10) and in the Hermitage (No. 629). The half-length figure of a St. James, apparently a free copy after Ribera (in the possession of Ch. Sedelmeyer in Paris in 1891), shows that Van Dyck at that time was occasionally influenced by other artists as well as by his master. The excellent figures in the great "Still-Life" by Snyders in the Hofmuseum in Vienna and in the Hague Gallery, and the figures in the foreground of the "Battle" by P. Snayers in the Munich Pinakothek show that he was also occasionally helping other artists. In the latter picture we again meet the horse of the "St. Martin" in Windsor.

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correct knowledge of Van Dyck's early period of work, even if this knowledge was only based upon tradition ; as far as we can trace back those portraits at all, they were considered at that time, and almost without exception, to be Van Dyck's paintings.

I have spoken of "Christ and the Little Children," from the former Blenheim Gallery, as a particularly characteristic picture. As the portraits are intermingled with ideal figures, a comparison with those numerous, above-mentioned Biblical pictures renders it easy and certain to recognise young Van Dyck's manner in the drawing of the hands, in the colouring and treatment. A family portrait, under the name of Jordaens, in Sir Frederick Cook's Gallery at Richmond, shows a very similar character. A large portrait of an elderly couple, ascribed to Rubens, in the Gallery at Buda Pesth, is far more important but no less characteristic.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Two famous portraits by Van Dyck, of the painter Frans Snyders and his wife (one is now in Howard Castle, the other in Warwick Castle), are proved to be works from his early period by the age of the persons represented. Different portraits, which are now principally in English private possession, bear exactly the same character : a "Young Lady with her Child," and the "Portrait of a Man" at Lord Brownlow's in Ashridge Park ; a "Young Woman" at Lord Denbigh's in London ; a similar portrait in Petworth ; the "Cornelius van der Geest" in the National Gallery ; and the portrait of a man under Rubens's name, and showing great affinity to the last-named picture in the Brussels Gallery (No. 419, dated 1619). Judging by the coarse and superficial treatment and the thick laying-on of the colours the figure of a lute-player with a landscape background, in the possession of Herr Wiener in Berlin, belongs to the earliest portraits. Other and, generally speaking, no less important portraits of this period are to be found at Madame André's in Paris (a handsome portrait of a corpulent old gentleman from the Rothan Collection, in which it was ascribed to Jordaens) ; at Mr. Cartwright's (a young woman and an old man) ; in the Kestner Museum



Certain large pictures in the Hermitage may be mentioned as being most important among these youthful portraits by Van Dyck enumerated in the footnote. They are among his finest works; portrait-painting altogether has produced nothing better. Two of them used formerly to be considered as by Van Dyck; they have all the characteristic qualities of the portraits in question. One, representing a young couple with a child, was known as the "Family of Frans Snyders" (No. 627); the title is incorrect, as Snyders never had any children. The "Young Lady with her Little

at Hanover (an excellent portrait of a man); in the Stroganoff Collection in St. Petersburg (an Antwerp scholar and his wife, a particularly admirable work). The portraits of P. Hecke and his wife, under the name of Rubens, are in the G. von Rothschild Collection in Paris; a "Young Girl" in the Holford Collection (given as a Rubens); the portraits of Herr and Frau de Vinck are in private possession in Antwerp. Other pictures are in the Madrid Gallery ("Portrait of a Clergyman," No. 1334), in the Cassel Gallery (the "Woman and the Rose," "Snyders and his Wife," and the "Portrait of the painter Wilden"). Then there is a whole series of portraits in the Dresden Gallery and in the Liechtenstein Gallery in Vienna. In the last-named collection three of the portraits still bear Van Dyck's name: two companion pieces, one a middle-aged couple, and the other the large picture of a young lady in an armchair. Two other portraits of an elderly man and his wife show in the background the ages of the persons presented and also the date 1618 as the year in which the pictures were painted. In spite of this date they are now ascribed to Rubens, whom they indeed nearly approach. But the peculiar drawing of the tapering fingers—so entirely characteristic of Van Dyck—the gray shadows and rather bald treatment of the details are as opposed to Rubens as they are significant of Van Dyck's early period. The portrait of a man with his gloves in his right hand (under Rubens's name), acquired by the Metropolitan Museum in New York from Lord Methuen's Collection, as well as the young man of the family De Charles (1620), in the possession of Sir George Donaldson in London, have the same character. The smaller portraits of another old couple, from the same year (1618), in the Dresden Gallery are nearly related



Daughter" (No. 635, now ascribed to Rubens), supposed to be Susanna Fourment and her daughter Katharina, both full-length, is as masterly as it is charming; it was acquired from the Choiseul Collection. But also the famous portrait of Isabella Brant, with the triumphal arch of Rubens' palace in the distance, seems to me a masterpiece of the pupil's, not of the teacher's. I imagine that it is the picture which Van Dyck painted of Rubens's wife when he left his home to go to England. The rich colouring, the brilliant warm tone, the delicate gray shadows, the drawing of the slender hands, are

but decidedly of less importance. A certain immature awkwardness in the arrangement and treatment speak against Rubens being their author; his portraits from these years show the fullest artistic freedom. The half-length figure of a young man in the same collection, painted almost entirely in brown, may be considered as a hastily executed portrait study from Van Dyck's early period; it shows affinity to the Apostles' heads. Some years later we find two paintings: one is the delightful picture of a young woman, coquettishly drawing a shawl over her head. It is distinguished by the enamel-like laying-on of the colours, and is a free copy after the portrait by Rubens, owned by G. von Rothschild in Paris. The other is a delightful portrait of a lady with her child. Both pictures are in Dresden and both fully rank with the women's portraits mentioned before as being in English private possession; for instance, the wife of Snyders, owned by Lord Warwick, and other portraits. The "Portrait of a Gentleman putting on his Gloves" is equally fine. The portraits of a young couple in the Dresden Gallery (nearly approaching the old couple just spoken of) and the famous portrait of an old man standing by a chair appear to me to be Van Dyck's characteristic work. The two splendid pictures of a young man and his wife in the Hermitage Gallery (Nos. 580 and 581) are similarly handled, and like those mentioned above are ascribed to Rubens. In the slight and spirited treatment, in the fresh, vivid flesh-colour, these pictures have so much affinity with Rubens's contemporary attested portraits that only by closely comparing Van Dyck's youthful work with his teacher's undoubted portraits can any decision respecting their authorship be arrived at.

all characteristics of his work, and opposed to the manner of Rubens.

Van Dyck's individuality comes out so strongly in all these pictures that we are rarely in doubt as to whether we are to attribute them to him or to his teacher, even though—as a consequence of the master's great influence upon the pupil—the two artists are so much like one another at this time that at the first glance they may be confused. We are most impressed, particularly in Van Dyck's larger compositions, by the deep colouring and the extreme warmth of the tone. In painting flesh he avoids the cool bluish half shadows and the red tone which are so characteristic of Rubens: his half shadows have a gray tone which occasionally merges into greenish, and the deep shadows are a warm, sometimes almost fiery, brown. In the light the flesh has a lustrous blonde colour; in the painting of elderly people it is reddish-brown. The artist's colouring has a glow and intensity scarcely attained by the great Venetians, by Titian and Tintoretto; though he is not, indeed, always faithful to nature. The drawing is just as characteristic, particularly of the hands and feet: the fingers and toes are remarkably long and spread out, the fingers are tapering. The colours are laid on more evenly than with Rubens; the ground is sometimes left in the very large paintings. The under-painting, which then appears, is generally gray, while that of Rubens, which is particularly prominent in the half shadows, is brown. The master's treatment is fluid, in the earlier period occasionally rather glassy, whereas the pupil lays on his colours dryly and thickly; the latter nearly always paints on canvas, while Rubens prefers wood. Generally

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speaking, Van Dyck, in this period, exaggerates his master's peculiarities in every way: his figures are still more colossal and muscular, his colours still richer and more brilliant, his execution still broader and more fugitive. Only when he works direct from nature, especially in the portrait, he seems more dependent on the model, and his conception is therefore more sober and more simple than his master's. It was just the limitations of Van Dyck's talent which made him a better portrait-painter than his teacher. Rubens's creative and exuberant fancy involuntarily led him into conventionality, into generalising and exaggerating the forms when his intention was simply to render the model, the person before him. The pupil's simpler, less original talent not only compelled his dependence upon the great masters under whose influence he happened to be, but at the same time also his happy dependence upon nature, upon the personality he had to portray. This truth to nature, this reverence, sure grasp, and ardent rendering of the individuality, united with rare taste and dignified conception are the qualities which have made the artist one of the greatest portrait-painters of all times. Van Dyck is not merely a bald copyist of his model as are so many of his contemporaries in the Spanish as well as in the Dutch provinces: the forms of the persons he has painted tell us of their spirit, and to their individuality he has added a piece of his own nature, and of the best he had to give, that aristocratic, chivalrous touch which constitutes the charm of his portraits.

By the side of this strongly pronounced individuality and truth to nature there are various outward signs which



help us to distinguish between the pupil's portraits from the time during which he was working with Rubens and those of his master. In the first years there is a certain monotony, even baldness of arrangement in Van Dyck's work. He places his models before a simple, dark wall, or before a coloured curtain draped from a pillar. The costume is generally dark, and, compared with Rubens, hastily and most mechanically rendered. The persons invariably stand, their position is three-quarter face, their carriage is studied, and not infrequently almost meaningless; the way in which the men clench their fists, and in which the women's hands with their tapering fingers, hang down lifelessly, or are hidden in the shadow, has occasionally an unpleasing effect, while, again, some of these portraits are most delightfully drawn and arranged. Very characteristic are the extreme clearness and luminosity of the flesh-colour, the warm, almost uniformly blonde lights and the cool gray shadows, which often become almost black in the greatest darkness, whereas Rubens's flesh-colour shows at one and the same time bluish half-tones, brownish shadows, and reddish lights. And whereas Rubens—to light up his picture—likes to put a red reflex tone in the shadow between the fingers, in the mouth, in the shell of the ear, and so on, we often find with Van Dyck in the same place an opaque deep black line. The light-effect is still more intense with the pupil, the chiaroscuro toned considerably deeper. And, lastly, the nervous excitability which the artist imparts to his figures gives a piquant realism to his portraits.

If the young Van Dyck had only painted the historical



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pictures and portraits which were executed in the course of a few years, and of which we can now produce more than a hundred, he would have evinced a creative power and a delight in creating unparalleled in the history of the youth of great artists. There is hardly one of the most experienced and facile painters who has accomplished anything similar even when at the height of his career. But we know now that Van Dyck, as assistant to Rubens, was doing important work for him at the same time. A series of the great master's most famous works were produced with considerable help from Van Dyck. The accidental discovery of documents relating to an old lawsuit has brought this fact to light. But beyond this and by the knowledge gained of the two artists' individuality at this time—which knowledge we owe to the study of their original works—we can compile another list of remarkable paintings in which Rubens sketched in the outlines but most of the work was Van Dyck's.

Whenever an appreciation has been attempted of the great master of the Flemish School the paintings with the history of Decius Mus are always mentioned among his masterpieces. These compositions harmonise so entirely with the artist's gifts and are so universally admired that the question whether Rubens painted them himself, or whether in executing them he made use of his pupil's help has scarcely ever been propounded. With no little astonishment therefore do we find in the admirable *Geschiedenis der Antwerpsche Schilderschool*, by Joseph van den Branden, that these paintings are not cited among the works of Rubens, but among those of his pupil, Anton van Dyck. Van den Branden had his good reasons

for so doing; different documents, which bring such clear and convincing information that we cannot ignore them, give Van Dyck as the painter. The facts of the case are as follows: In a document dated February 16, 1661, preserved in the archives of the town of Antwerp, Gonzales Cocx, the well-known Antwerp portraitist—a countryman and contemporary of Rubens and Van Dyck—and his neighbour, Junker Jan Baptist van Eyck, declare that they have bought for 400 Flemish pounds, or 2400 florins, five of the paintings of “de Historie van den Keyser Decius,” painted by Antonio van Dyck. The sixth picture of this series was already in the possession of the two purchasers; all the pictures were exhibited in the large hall of Junker van Eyck’s house in the Lange Gasthuisstraat. A document dating about twenty years later gives more details about the authorship of the paintings: on August 15, 1682, G. Cocx, then lying seriously ill, declares in his will that he is part owner of the “Stucken van Decius, geschildert van Van Dyck, naer de schetsen van Rubens.” Ten years later, after J. B. van Eyck’s death, on July 9, 1692, the pictures are quoted in the inventory in the hall of Van Eyck’s house in the following manner: “Ses stucken schilderije, geordonneert (composed) door den heere Rubbens ende opgeschildert (executed) door den heere Van Dyck, wesende de Historie van den Decius” (the enumeration of the single pictures follows).

This description and the repeated declarations as to the authorship of the pictures—which all tally with one another—are of convincing clearness. If the astonishing nature of the fact still leaves doubts in our minds, they must vanish before the number of other external and

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internal reasons which confirm the documents. Rubens tells us of the Decius series in his letters to Dudley Carleton, with whom he was in correspondence about the exchange of a series of prominent pictures from his own hand for a collection of antique marble statues. On May 26, 1618, he writes to the English Ambassador at The Hague that he will send him all the dimensions of his cartoons of the history of Decius Mus, the Roman Consul who sacrificed himself to help the Roman people to victory; but he must first write to Brussels, as he had sent everything to the manufacturers there. From an earlier letter, dated May 12, we learn that the "exceedingly magnificent cartoons" were commissioned by some noblemen in Genoa. A. Rosenberg (*Rubens-Briefe*, p. 50) does, indeed, refuse to admit that by "magnificent cartoons" is meant the large oil paintings in the Liechtenstein Gallery, and not drawings, but this is certainly incorrect. The figures in these paintings are all left-handed, and therefore it is beyond question that they were intended as designs for carpets; we observe the same thing in other large paintings of the kind—I mention the "Triumphs of Religion"—which were also designs for Gobelines.

We have documental certainty that Van Dyck not only helped in the execution of the Decius series, but was also concerned in a second still larger series of Rubens' paintings, the decorations which adorned the Church of the Jesuits in Antwerp; in the contract from March 29, 1620, his assistance was made a condition. The young artist could not, indeed, have helped to finish these pictures, as he moved to London on November 25 of the same year. After working at these two great series of pictures it is



probable, on the face of things, that Van Dyck, as long as he was assistant to Rubens (a contemporary tells us that he was living in his house at that time), was also employed by him in a similar way for other work. The Gobelins with the Decius pictures had been woven from the cartoons in Brussels by the end of May; the cartoons were therefore finished before then, and so Van Dyck entered the studio of Rubens at latest on February 11, 1618, immediately after being received into the Guild as master, or it may have been even earlier. In a letter to Dudley Carleton from April 28, 1618, Rubens speaks of the large painting of the "Discovery of Achilles among the Daughters of Lycomedes," and says that "it was painted by his best pupil, but that he had gone over it himself with his own hand." This picture is now in the Prado Museum, and in spite of Rubens having painted over various parts—as mentioned above—particularly the figures of the two men, it clearly shows the hand of young Van Dyck.

We may therefore suppose that the paintings which left Rubens' studio during the years 1618 and 1620 were executed with Van Dyck's assistance. Close examination shows that the master did indeed make ample use of his pupil's help. Particularly striking examples of this are some well-known pictures in the Berlin Gallery, where the above-mentioned youthful works of Van Dyck are hung quite near so as to admit of comparison.

In design and conception the "Raising of Lazarus" is as characteristic and excellent a work of Rubens as any other of the master's similar Biblical compositions. The small sketch for the picture is in the Louvre, only differs



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slightly from the Berlin altar picture, and shows, in execution, all Rubens' well-known qualities. His hand is so discernible in the Berlin picture, in drawing as well as in colouring, that the picture decidedly deserves to be considered his own work. But if we examine the picture closely, particularly the more subordinate parts, we occasionally discover something of an alien nature. The colouring has deep, warm, and vigorous shadows, such as we do not find in Rubens's original paintings, particularly those from the years 1618-1620, when this altarpiece was painted. The rich colouring, too, the brilliant red of Christ's mantle, which appears in precisely the same way in Van Dyck's "Mocking of Christ," is in no small degree different from his master's manner. The drawing, particularly of the hands and feet, show Van Dyck's above-mentioned peculiarities. We see on the *pentimenti*<sup>1</sup> of Christ's feet how Rubens corrected his pupil's exaggeratedly large and slender hands and feet; the right foot is shortened by almost one quarter. In the treatment of the two Apostles, of the feet of Lazarus, of Christ's red mantle, we notice the most striking affinity to Van Dyck's "Mocking of Christ," while most of the picture, particularly the heads and hands of the principal figures, has been painted over by Rubens. In spite of this the different under-painting produces a general effect which varies not a little from Rubens' original pictures of this period; compare the grand picture, "Christ and the Sinners," in the Pinakothek at Munich. It is nearly related to the Berlin picture, and was probably painted only a short time before it. The construction is similar, the figure of Christ shows

<sup>1</sup> Alterations made by the artist himself.

great affinity in conception and bearing, we observe the same close relationship in the head of Peter. The famous three-sided altar-picture in the Frauenkirche in Mechlin, "The Miraculous Draught of Fishes," is also closely akin to our picture. The conception and bearing of the two principal figures, Christ and Peter, are borrowed from the main group of Lazarus; but the grouping is just the opposite and the situation is altered accordingly. It is not unlikely that Van Dyck was employed in the execution of this altarpiece, as he painted a small copy of it in gray, probably intending to make use of it for an engraving.

A second, it may be, contemporary painting in the Berlin Collection, in which we also think we trace Van Dyck's hand by the side of his teacher's, shows us this indefatigable master in quite another field of work: it is the "Bacchanal" and was acquired from the Marlborough Gallery. At all times Rubens has employed his brush in the pictorial rendering of impassioned sensual life. In the first years after his return from Italy the presentments are calm and episodic, the subjects mythological or allegorical; for instance, the series of the Apotheosis of the Ocean, and presentments from the old myths of the gods. The subjects change with the growing tendency of the artist to depict passionate life and movement. From the years 1616 till 1618 we have those delineations of the wildest sensual pleasures, those Bacchanals, of which the Blenheim picture is known as the largest and the one of most gorgeous colour. In his later period, when enjoying country life for some spring and summer months on his estate of Steen, it was his particular delight to depict the landscape around him, and into these pictures he put those rough deities of Nature

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with which Greek imagination peopled wood and field: he paints fauns and nymphs hunting, gathering fruit, and in their mad and amorous play. The "Bacchanal" of the Berlin Collection is a very finely balanced composition which we are able to trace in two stages; they are both in one and the same picture, in the Bacchanal of the Munich Pinakothek.<sup>1</sup> The wood panel on which it is painted consists of several parts pieced together, and this and the different treatment show that the composition was originally confined to the principal group, to a drunken faun supported by an old man and a negro. Later on Rubens enlarged the picture on three sides, and expanded the composition in the way in which we now see it; the treatment of the additional figures is much slighter, often sketchy, but exceedingly clever. In this form the Munich picture was certainly the groundwork of the larger, carefully executed painting in Berlin. The delightful and cynical group of the drunken faun-mother, who is lying on the ground and suckling her young, is replaced by a charming group of children; instead of the old man in the Munich picture, a faun supports the drunken Silenus; amongst the followers the principal figure, the naked blonde nymph, is added. The magnificent build of this figure, on which the full light falls, gives the Berlin picture, in composition as well as in colouring, an essentially different character from that of the Munich one. In the latter picture the riotous troop who are staggering forward senselessly intoxicated are treated with the coarse humour which distinguishes similar subjects by Jacob Jordaens: by the introduction of the magnificent

<sup>1</sup> A small and hastily executed sketch, painted in gray, in the O. von Hollitscher Collection, in Berlin, already shows entire figures.



nude figure of the woman in the Berlin example, a marked sensual touch weakens the humoristic character of the composition ; but the balance is preserved by the naïve merriment of the delightful group of children who have taken the place of the half-animal group of fauns in the Munich picture. The bright figure of the stately nymph, with her milk-white skin and her ash blonde hair, furnished the artist with the most effective contrast to the deep-toned colours of the principal group—the old Silenus, the fauns with their browned skin, and the dark Ethiopian. He has employed this contrast most skilfully to heighten the pictorial effect of the picture ; every possible gradation is made use of and intensified by the rich, deep-toned colouring of the garments and by the gloomy evening sky.

Just this deep colouring and this conspicuous warm tone are characteristics which speak for the probability of Van Dyck being concerned in the execution of this picture. Rubens has indeed painted over most figures so completely here that Van Dyck's co-operation is not so striking as in the "Raising of Lazarus," but still the pupil's hand can be clearly recognised in the colouring, and in some places even in the treatment. The deep, warm effect of the picture is also characteristic of Van Dyck's paintings from this period, but not of Rubens's original works. Various reasons combine to place its production just during the time that Van Dyck was assistant to Rubens. For one thing, the head of the young nymph in the faun's arm to the extreme right of the picture, who smiles roguishly at the spectator, has unmistakably the features of Rubens's first wife ; she may be in the middle of the twenties here. And



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then, among the children, it is not difficult to find out the heads of this woman's two sons; one is about five, the other rather more than a year old. As these children were born in 1614 and 1618, their age gives the year 1619 as the date of the execution of this picture, whereas the Munich picture, in which only the eldest boy appears, was therefore painted one or two years earlier.<sup>1</sup>

In addition to these works is another series of partly mythological, partly religious subjects which reveal Van Dyck's co-operation;<sup>2</sup> to the latter belong the already mentioned series of paintings for the Church of the

<sup>1</sup> Another external proof that Van Dyck was employed in the execution of the Berlin picture may be found in the fact that the study for the head of the Moor who supports the drunken Silenus is to be seen upon the above-mentioned tablet, with studies of an Ethiopian's head, in the Brussels Museum; and this work is now universally and rightly considered to be from the hand of Van Dyck. The same negro again appears in the well-known "Feast in Simon's House," by Rubens, which passed into the Collection at the Hermitage with the Houghton Gallery. This picture therefore belongs to the same period, but I cannot, with any certainty, discover traces of Van Dyck's co-operation in it. But he copied the picture at that time, and the copy, which at once reveals the younger master in the exaggeratedly warm tone, and in the peculiar treatment of the hands and feet, is also in the Hermitage (No. 658).

<sup>2</sup> The co-operation of the pupil is clearly visible in the well-known "Madonna with the Penitent Sinners" in the Cassel Gallery; we can see from the age of the artist's two children, who stood as models for John and the infant Christ, that it was painted at the same time. Here, too, the warm tone of the colour is characteristic of Van Dyck. The same may be said of the famous "Lion Hunt" in the Munich Pinakothek, in which the figures are by Van Dyck; Rubens has scarcely touched them. The "Samson taken Prisoner," in the same Gallery, is almost entirely Van Dyck's work. Other contemporary pictures, chiefly of subjects taken from Roman History, correspond with the Decius Mus Series, and in their execution similarly reveal the hand of the pupil; for instance, "Mucius Scaevola," in the Gallery at Buda

Jesuits in Antwerp.<sup>1</sup> This brings the associated work of the two Grand Masters to a close. It is one of the most interesting phases in the history of Dutch art, and it is also important on account of its after-effect upon the two artists. After Van Dyck's first short stay in England and his four years' residence in Italy which followed upon it, he returned to his native town for some long time, but he never again came into close relation with his master. Outward circumstances may have had something to do with this; diplomatic transactions kept Rubens away from Antwerp for many years at that time; but the art and views of life of the two masters had also considerably changed. Through his diplomatic journeys Rubens again came in close touch with classic Italian art in the great collections of his princely patrons in England and Spain. The man of fifty—in the same way as nearly a generation before—devoted every free hour to the study of those great masters; the idolised prince of painters

Pesth; "Ajax and Cassandra," in the Liechtenstein Gallery; the "St. Ambrose repelling Theodosius from the Door of the Church," in the Hofmuseum in Vienna (the upper part of which is much painted over by Rubens); probably also "Judas Maccabaeus Praying for the Dead," in the Nantes Gallery. Among the religious subjects of this period, the paintings of the "Crucifixion," in the Antwerp and Toulouse Museums, also bear signs that Van Dyck was employed in their execution.

<sup>1</sup> It was expressly stipulated that Van Dyck was to be employed in carrying out this last great undertaking. As the contract was signed in March 1620, and Van Dyck remained in Antwerp till the late autumn, he had time to do a considerable amount of work; how far this was the case we can no longer judge, as the church was, unhappily, burnt down. Only the three colossal altarpieces were saved; they are now in the Hofmuseum in Vienna, and are certainly not the work of Van Dyck; quite another hand is visible in the cool colouring, and in the firm, solid treatment.

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copied their works with the ardour of a young beginner. When he returned, when with his young wife, Helene Fourment, new joy of life entered his long desolate home, he again went to work with the fire and force of youth. He has indeed still to furnish his patrons with great series of decorative paintings, but he only designs what his pupils carry out, he abandons himself to the promptings of his inexhaustible imagination, with perfect joy and love he devotes himself to the realisation of his own creations. And thus, under the influence of the great Venetian masters, and the stimulus of his happy union and joyous life in the pleasant surroundings of his estate, he creates a number of the most glorious pictures, some of which are improvisations of hasty impressions, others are executed with the greatest care and love, and are returned to and worked at again and again. The fervid feeling which inspired these last works finds expression in the vigorous colouring, the glowing tone, and the powerful execution. So from year to year creative power and joy grew and increased in the aging, sickly artist till Death took the brush out of his hands.

With Anton van Dyck it was quite different. In Italy his excitable, impressionable nature gave itself up to the full enjoyment of the great Venetian masters under whose influence were painted all those distinguished portraits of the Genoese aristocracy who had received the handsome, rich and witty artist with open arms. When he returned to his native town four years later and, in the absence of the Grand Master, was commissioned to decorate the altars of the churches and private chapels a spirit of eclectic coolness and cold calculation had taken the place



of youthful exuberance and glowing enthusiasm. But under the mighty influence of his former master he still preserved his position as an esteemed painter, and in portrait-painting particularly he did eminent work. Some years later, when he saw his desire fulfilled, when he was summoned to England as court-painter to Charles I., the decline in his art became more and more perceptible. Never an entirely independent talent, accustomed from his youth to follow greater masters, Van Dyck's artistic isolation in England could not but have an unfavourable effect upon his work, all the more so as the position which King Charles gave him about his person took the artist away from his profession. His enormous revenues melted away in the dissolute life of the English court. His delicate health received a mortal wound. The brilliant, outward success, the honours and wealth heaped upon him in England had a harmful influence upon his character, upon his sensually excitable, sensitive nature. Hurrying from one enjoyment to the other, with an insatiable thirst for gold and honours, exhausted in mind and body, the spoilt child of fortune was dissatisfied and at war with himself, he became arrogant and disobliging, his pretensions knew no bounds. He treated his art more and more as a great business, of which he was only the manager. All his numerous assistants had certain parts to play in it: one painted the ground of the pictures, another painted the fabrics, a third the landscape, others the hands, and so on. Pictures manufactured in this manner could not possess genuine artistic feeling even though they were occasionally painted over by the master. Pictorially too they were bound to suffer, and even the technical execu-



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tion could only be unfavourably affected by the number of hands employed, by the loveless, mechanical nature of the work. Most of the pictures, indeed, which he painted during the last years of his stay in England are not only strikingly conventional in feeling, hastily executed and frequently, even, ill-considered in pictorial treatment, but the work is sometimes so carelessly carried out that they have either darkened or the colours have faded till they are scarcely recognisable.

Even in London Van Dyck did not consider himself fully appreciated, did not think he was paid enough for his work. When, therefore, his great teacher, Rubens, died in Antwerp in May 1640, he hastened thither hoping to be entrusted with the completion of the great commissions given to his former master, particularly those of Philip of Spain. But his demands, as we learn from the Cardinal-Infante's letters, were so ridiculously high, his manner to King Philip's brother was so overbearing that the negotiations were broken off at once. Then there seemed a chance of a great commission for the artist in Paris. Ill as he was, he left England with his wife and a large retinue in September 1640 and repaired to the French court. But here again his hopes were blighted; King Louis had already given Poussin the order to decorate the Gallery of the Louvre. In spite of this, Van Dyck's stay in Paris—perhaps on account of his increasing weakness—lasted more than a year. He returned to London at the end of November; on December 9 the illness which had wasted him for years carried him off.

Max Rooses concludes his summary of the artist with the following words: "Van Dyck dreamed of higher ideals

and was subject to deeper feelings than can be rendered by any brush ; but, while feverishly endeavouring during his short life to give shape to his visions, he could not escape the petty discouragements and gloomy disappointments which fatally weakened his magic hand before it was seized in the cold grasp of premature death."

THE LAST PERIOD OF WORK OF PETER PAUL  
RUBENS, AND THE INFLUENCE OF HIS WIFE,  
HELENE FOURMENT, UPON HIS ART

RUBENS worked his way slowly to full individuality and perfect mastery. Though his life came to a close before he had passed the estate of manhood yet he has scarcely been equalled by any other artist in wealth and extent of work. Not one single picture is attested from the period before his Italian journey which he undertook when he was twenty-three; and the paintings which were executed during the nine years of his stay in the South are not particularly numerous and cannot be compared with the work of his later period. From the moment that he returned home and settled down there permanently we meet him as the artist whom we all know. The three following decades of an almost uninterrupted, restless activity fall into two great periods which are fairly exactly defined by his first and second marriage. This is not a pure matter of chance; for although different circumstances dominated the master's artistic development, yet the influence of these two admirable women was also of remarkable importance. The early years of each marriage are marked by the wealth of mythological and Bacchic presentments, of which we may say the artist has created hundreds. When we examine them with

regard to their origin we shall be able to divide them into two groups, one of which belongs to the years immediately after his return from Italy, the other to the last period of his life. The pictures in the former group were therefore painted in the first years of his marriage with Isabella Brant; those in the latter group after his second marriage with Helene Fourment. Such wifely influence is not unique in the history of great artists; as far as we know their lives, we can see that a strong passion for a woman and a happy union brings deeper sensual feeling into their work. Art and morality in no way suffer thereby. The artist's own passion appears purified and ennobled in his paintings, the fresh and vigorous sentiment in them impresses the observer overpoweringly and vividly. This is particularly the case with the great painters north of the Alps who found their highest satisfaction in happy married life.

Rembrandt was more deeply affected by the life of the heart and depicted it more vividly than any other painter has done. Thus in the years following his marriage with Saskia van Ujlenborch we observe fascinating and sensual pictures, such as the so-called "Danæ" in the Hermitage; and about twenty years later, during the time of his connection with Hendrikje Stoffels, he painted the "Woman Bathing" in the National Gallery, the "Bathsheba" of the Louvre, and other pictures in which the naked female body is delineated with the same charm. With Rubens, whose whole art is characterised by a strain of vigorous sensuality, this influence was sure to express itself with twofold strength although in quite a different way. And, indeed, his Bacchanals, his love-scenes



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from classic mythology, his bucolic pictures and similar subjects which present the life of the senses with naïve coarseness and power, but yet without grossness, were painted partly in the first years after his marriage with Isabella Brant, partly twenty years later, after his marriage with Helene Fourment. He was most prolific and did his best work in the period of the second marriage.

The artist married Helene Fourment, who was sixteen, when he was fifty-four. Scarcely ever do we find the wife of a notable artist so entirely pervading her husband's sphere of thought. Not that she materially influenced her husband's ways and doings or even ruled the house—for this she had little talent; she was beautiful and amiable, but apparently not very clever—nor was Rubens the man to submit to such treatment. But the young wife, by her beauty and her womanly charm, exercised such a spell over her husband that she became the centre-point of his creations and remained so till his death. The artist has immortalised her in innumerable portraits, she was his model for almost numberless compositions, he introduced her, generally as the principal figure, into his pictures. His whole life was modelled on hers, with her he again became young. His house once more became his real home, and soon the voices of merry children were heard in it. In the winter they lived in the stately art-palace in Antwerp, in the summer in the mediæval Steen Castle on his delightful estate. We know both residences from different pictures of this period; the artist has employed them as stage or background on or before which he represents his beloved wife. Their happy married life



RUBENS  
HELENE FOURMENT WITH TWO CHILDREN  
LOUVRE

*To face p. 332*



gave Rubens a new field of activity, the centre-point of which was the newly-won family life and the work for his own home, in which he absolutely followed the promptings of his genius. The other paintings which he executed, particularly those for his princely patrons, harmonised with his own artistic ideals, since the delicate feeling these princes had for art either made Rubens's taste theirs, or led them to subordinate their wishes to his judgment.

We know little of Helene Fourment apart from what has been handed down to us in the pictures; of her character we hear nothing at all. She would not interest us, and our ignorance would not trouble us, were it not that her youth and Flemish beauty had attracted the eyes of the great artist. As it is, we owe her the deepest gratitude: she deserves the monument her husband has set up to her; she inspired him, she aroused love in the elderly man, and thereby breathed new life into his work. This new and last phase in Rubens's art, like the conjugal life of the unequal pair, was no passing and feeble impulse, it was vital and fruitful, so that these creations surpass everything he had done before. His tender love to his young wife, the sensual charm and pleasant stimulus of his life with her, and the fair troop of children she had borne him, led the elderly artist to the renewed study of nature, particularly of the nude; and he pursues this study as honestly and thoroughly as if his attention were directed to it for the first time. In this way Rubens discovered quite new beauties in nature, such as his art had not found before, and such as no painter before or after him has depicted so luxuriantly and so magnificently. In studying his wife, in studying her body which, as no other model would have



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done, she patiently permitted as often as he wished—and he was unwearied in this wish—Rubens developed an impressionism of his own. With his honesty and industry, joined with his unique knowledge of art and experience, as well as his inexhaustible imagination and creative power, this impressionism represents the highest phase reached by art. There is a freshness and youthful power in the paintings of these last years; they are filled with a love of life which is all the more remarkable, as the rapidly ageing artist was tormented by painful attacks of gout which confined him to a sick bed for weeks, and only permitted him to work with much difficulty and great pain.

Thanks to Rubens's delight in his work, thanks, too, to the brilliant beauty of his model, his paintings from this period show that tendency to bright colouring, that peculiar luminosity, and at the same time that perfection of form for which his eye had again been trained by the studies made not long before, particularly of Titian's paintings in Madrid and London. Such studies had in every way deepened his conception of nature, and again directed his attention to the landscape which gave him new pleasure after the purchase in 1635 of his estate of Steen. Free nature now presents itself to him in the same sunny mood as the human shape, as the reflection of his own happy life.

Rubens seems to have painted Helene Fourment directly his relations with her began. It is perhaps the *fiancée* or the newly-married wife we see in the charming little picture in the Pinakothek in Munich. In it the artist has represented himself conducting Helene, who is still a mere girl, through the house; the youngest son of the first mar-

riage is with them. The same boy follows his young mother almost like a page in the splendid large picture belonging to the Baroness A. Rothschild in Paris (formerly at Blenheim), where we see Helene at the door of the house waiting for the carriage. Here, too, she has quite youthful features; and the boy therefore cannot be her own son, as Rooses supposes; her eldest boy was not as old as this one when Rubens died. In the period following, the artist painted various pictures of his wife every year. Sometimes we see her alone, sometimes with him or accompanied by one or two boys, and we admire the rich dress and the almost princely luxury which surrounded her. From the year in which Rubens bought his estate of Steen and invariably enjoyed country life there every spring till the autumn, these splendid subject-pictures of his wife become rarer and soon cease altogether; as far as I can see he painted no more after the year 1636. But now Helene appears in another part. To these last years belong the large pictures, principally with mythological subjects, in which she is the principal figure. Not infrequently, too, even though the features are different, she was the model for most of the youthful female figures, while in many other rich compositions which were executed without much previous study and from the artist's fertile imagination (such as the "Massacre of the Innocents," the "Rape of the Sabines," and so on), her image was, half unconsciously perhaps, before Rubens's eye. To the first category belong the "Judgment of Paris" in the National Gallery and in the Prado Museum; the "Andromeda" in the Berlin Gallery; the "Three Graces," "Diana and Callisto," and another "Andromeda" in the Prado; the

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“Bath of Diana” in the former Schubart Collection in Munich; the “St. Cecilia” in the Berlin Gallery; and particularly various presentments of Nymphs and Satyrs in the Galleries in Madrid, Berlin, and other places. Occasionally such a study became a portrait, as the famous “pelsken” in the Hofmuseum in Vienna: Helene Fourment leaving the bath in a fur mantle; or a bucolic genre picture, as the “Shepherd and Shepherdess” in the Munich Pinakothek. Three great paintings which depict the dominion of love over rich and poor, presenting the subject in the most varied manner with the greatest dramatic force and in gorgeous and fascinating colour, were formed by Rubens into a mighty trilogy of the power of love: they are the Venus vulgivaga in the “Peasants’ Dance” at the Louvre; courtly love in the “Love Garden” of the Prado Gallery, and in the possession of Baron Edmond Rothschild in Paris; and the heavenly kingdom of the Goddess Love in the “Venus Festival” of the Vienna Hofmuseum. Some of these pictures were ordered by Philip IV. of Spain and Charles I. of England, but the majority the artist painted for himself to decorate the rooms of his Antwerp house and his estate of Steen. They are therefore nearly all his own choice and desire, and were executed really *con amore*, and principally as the outcome of the artist’s delight in his young wife’s beautiful body, which he has glorified in the most different positions in all these paintings.

When he was on his estate Rubens made use of every fine day and of the good hours between the attacks of his painful illness to enjoy and to study the pleasant country surroundings. Thus a whole series of landscapes were





RUBENS  
SUNSET  
NATIONAL GALLERY





created, some of them being the most beautiful ever painted by him. No other artist has produced their equal in powerful design, glorious colour, and exuberant light. What self-control, what joy in work and creative power, what enthusiasm and inward cheerfulness must have been possessed by the man who could paint such pictures as the "Landscape with the Castle of Steen" in the National Gallery, and the companion piece, the "Landscape with the Rainbow," in the Wallace Collection; as the "Phæacian Islands" and the "Return from the Harvest" in the Palazzo Pitti; and many other similar large and small landscapes in the Galleries of Munich, Paris, London, Vienna, and other places. The sunny beauty of the earth is depicted in every one in glowing tones, while he often suffered such pain that he was unable to hold his brush, and had to be wheeled to his easel in an invalid-chair.

Different presentments of country life, of which the "Peasants' Dance" in the Louvre is the best known, were produced in connection with these landscapes, and were in part intended as their accessories. Here the artist transforms the coarse scenes representing the ways and doings of the Flemish peasants into events from the lives of Titan shepherds. The fertile Flemish plains become the Arcadian home of a race full of unbridled passions; the meadows are peopled with sylvan gods, with nymphs and satyrs, the emblems of nature's luxuriant and unflagging activity.

Everything here is life and movement, colour and light; and so also in the historical subjects of this period it is his aim to depict the passions at their highest, to give life at its fullest. The means he employs to attain this are wealth of composition, indefiniteness of draughtsmanship,

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full and rich colouring, a bright flickering light, and an almost sketchy breadth of treatment. The bright sunshine which floods all these pictures invests the rich and glittering compositions with harmony and clearness, calms us when we view the most exciting scenes, reconciles us with the most forbidding subjects. Joy and serenity steal over us in looking at these pictures; they are the reflection of the great artist's happiness, they tell us how calm and how cheerful was the evening of his life.

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